

THE SILK OF THE KINE

A Novel

By L. McMANUS



*The Silk of the Kine shall rest at last;
What drove her forth but the dragon fly?
In the golden vale she shall feed full fast,
With her mild gold horn and her slow dark eye.*

—AUBREY DE VERE



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*"Ho! Brother Teage, what is your story?
I went to the wood, and shot a Tory,
I went to the wood and shot another,
Was it the same, or was it his brother?"*

*"I hunted him in, I hunted him out,
Three times through the bog, and about and about,
Till out of the bush I spied his head,
So I levelled my gun, and shot him dead."*

IRISH NURSERY RHYME

THE SILK OF THE KINE

I

“‘What is swifter than the wind?’ said Fionn.

‘The mind of a woman,’ said the maiden.”

MARGERY NY GUIRE sat in the horse-litter with the Transplanter's Certificate in her clenched hand. The traces of a long journey were on her dress, and from under her straw hat, with its faded ribbons, her little woe-begone face looked back towards the east.

The air around her was full of sound. The tramp of hoofs and feet made a deep monotone as men and cattle plodded over the plain. Every now and then some animal among the herds lowed in distress, or a sharp cry of human grief, abrupt, piercing as a *keen*, told of the bitterness and tumult of a soul. The crowd was broken up into groups; many of the horses were laden with household goods, others drew

cumbrous-looking carts, around which women and children hung, while fifty yards in the rear rode half a troop of horse.

Every face except the soldiers' in that slowly moving mass of humanity showed a passion of hate or grief. Before each man and woman lay a life that they feared more than death. Along the route their ranks had been thinned by despairing souls seeking their own rest from a grim world in lough or river. It was the exodus of a race; but steel swords drove, not a fiery pillar led, the Transplanted into the land of desolation.

Margery heard the wailing of the children, the broken voices, and the lowing of cattle as one in an evil dream. Life had been this dream since she had left the North to obey the Order. The certainties of the future had taken forms to her mind, and danced like the Erinyes in her path. Near her litter a woman sobbed, and the sound made her lean over the side with outstretched arms for the child the mother held up. The pallid face raised towards her told her of suffering worse than her own, and she called to the man who led her garran to stop.

"I am strong and well," she said, "and you shall ride."

When she had alighted and the garran had moved on with its new burden, she stood for a minute watching it with wide, vague eyes as it disappeared in the crowd. Then, suddenly starting, she walked forward as the clank of scabbards struck on her ear.

“Christ will come in the East,” she said to herself. “When He comes He will judge these men of the devil.”

It was a warm April afternoon, but pools of water lay in the hollows, and the ground was ploughed into mud by the cattle. A green mist hung on the awakening trees, and the spring flowers had broken into starry blossoms through the mosses in the thickets.

Every horror she dreaded lay in the West. As the people passed her by and she fell to the rear, a passion of longing for the deliverance of the nation filled her heart. The tumult there made her pause and turn her back upon the declining sun that had shone bright and warm all day upon her misery. A line of steel barred the eastward path, and her eyes sought the sea of light that spread far into space. Silvery cloud-boats floated in it to a rosy strand; shining forms looked over the gleaming battlements; a blessing, not a curse, seemed breaking from the sky. The peace and beauty

mocked her pain ; her heart cried for the Judge who would avenge the slain and the torture of the years. Night rushed down upon her soul, the mist gathered in her eyes, and when the soldiers rode up they found her lying unconscious upon the grass.

She was ordered to rise, then her silence and attitude made the officer in command bid a man dismount. The trooper turned her over and glanced at her face.

“Dead?” said the officer.

“Dead as Rahab, her mother,” answered the soldier, and remounted. The party rode on.

Life and memory returned to the girl a little later ; but she lay still, looking up at the brown sheathed buds of the oak under which she had fallen. She felt no wish to rise, nor knew any reason why she should live. Once she thought of the wolves and listened for the cry of the pack. Far in the distance she heard the faint lowing of the herds, and knew that she had fallen out of the terrible march. A breeze stirred the branches, and their shadows danced across her form. The whispers of the wind filled the air with sounds like the sighs and murmurs of some strange, lost host. Now and then golden lights shimmered over the mossy

bark, and gleaming brown-and-green islands stood out and vanished.

Her lids drooped and closed again till the sound of voices made her sit up with a sudden start of a wild animal roused in its lair. Anything human to her at the moment was terrifying. The land sloped from where she sat to a sandy hollow, and there she saw two men treading their way through the stunted black-thorn bushes. They came up the rising ground, and one of them shouted as he saw her. He wore a red coat, untanned boots that reached to his thighs, and a steel cap. He hurried forward, halting suddenly when a few feet from the tree. His companion, who was not in uniform, joined him, and they both stood in silence before the girl. The soldier's hand rested on the iron hilt of his sword as his gaze wandered down her face to her feet.

His eyes chilled her. The cold, calculating light in them seemed to war with his loose, sensual lips. They went again to her face, and she made an effort to rise.

"I would speak with you," he said, suddenly. "Hearken to me attentively. Who are you, and why are you in this spot?"

She was unable to answer. Her right hand

was pressed to the ground as she knelt on one knee ; her gaze was upon his face.

"What ! no tongue ? Then, lo ! I will find you one. You are that woman of the Transplanted that hath fled back to the Shannon. For this you shall be made a warning to all Irish and Papists."

His companion nudged him ; he was a younger man, with a subdued leer in his eye. "The *Joseph of Thornbury* will be due in a week," he remarked.

"If the wind favors," said the soldier, shortly.

"Twelve — leaving out the three, and this wench thirteen," continued the man. "A fair cargo for the Tobacco Islands."

"As I have trailed a pike I warrant I'll increase it," replied the soldier.

"Let go the three," urged the man. "The Adventurers and soldiery will raise an outcry."

His companion's answer was swift. "I tell you, man of fear," he exclaimed, "the three are Irish !"

As he spoke a light that might have come from hell flashed into the girl's mind. Lethargy, physical weakness, vanished before it. A cry of horror broke from her lips. "No !

you dare not—you dare not! You shall not sell me as a slave!" she cried.

The younger man grinned. The soldier with three strides reached her side. "Is that your tune, mistress?" he said, coolly. "Know that the Lord hath delivered the wild Irishrie, their man-servants and their maid-servants, their cattle and all their goods, into the hands of his chosen people. So, thus for the first-fruits!"

He seized her roughly, and, dragging off her scarf, wound it about her mouth. His companion caught one of her arms, and both men, raising her to her feet, forced her forward.

Margery's eyes glowed with a sudden light. In the heart of despair she had found her courage. She determined to kill herself before the man-catchers brought her to Galway or Limerick. A lake or river in her own land should cover her from shame and agony.

They spoke to each other now and again across her head, and agreed that her appearance warranted them at putting her price at thirty pounds. They referred to her hair, her features, her figure, with a coolness that cut her like a lash. Once the younger man made a coarse joke about her getting a husband in the Tobacco Islands, whereupon the soldier

bade him refrain from vain and carnal words, which were neither for the edifying of themselves nor the girl.

The direction they followed was southwest, leaving behind them the old track of the Con-naught Clans when they went up to war with the men of the Pale. The sun was near the horizon, and both men were anxious to get to a certain shelter before nightfall. They swept the country with keen glances on reaching any elevation, lest a wood-kerne or Torie lurked among the trees or in the hollows. Margery hung heavy and helpless on their arms. The younger man swore, and the soldier, though he reproved him for his oath, struck her himself, threatening to kill her if she did not mend her pace.

The armies of Coote and Ireton had marched with fire and sword through the land; and they crossed wild wastes, skirting bogs or floundering in the currachs, meeting neither man nor woman on their way. Once they passed the blackened walls of a dismantled castle, where five bodies swung from the trees. As the sun began to dip towards the Atlantic they entered a thicket, where a track through the underwood led to a narrow strip of open land bordered by a river. A

causeway made of wickerwork had been flung from bank to bank, and they dragged Margery upon it. Boggas, the soldier, went first, his right hand grasping her wrist, while his companion held her by the waist. The half-rotten bridge swayed beneath their feet, and she could see the long river grasses moving in the current. The men were so eager to get across that neither noticed for a few moments that a soldier rode along the opposite bank. Boggas was the first to see him, and stopped short.

"What do you wait for?" asked the younger man. "As we stand here we are a fair mark for the Tories."

Boggas made no reply, and when his fellow saw the rider his hand tightened on Margery. "What king-killer have we here?" he said, in alarm.

"One of Ireton's Horse," answered the elder man, coolly. "Come on. This is an honorable traffic, and we have nothing to fear. I did but pause to reconnoitre, as a soldier should."

He strode forward, dragging the girl with him. The trooper on the bank had turned his face towards them. His reins were slack on his horse's neck as the animal trod through the marsh-marigolds and iris clumps, and his

air was easy and careless. Suddenly he sat up in his saddle and eyed the men for a moment before his voice rang out across the water. "Forward!" he cried, and his tone had a ring of authority in it.

The man-catchers glanced at each other and paused.

"He will have a finger in the making of this pie, I perceive," said Boggas. "But thirty pounds splits easier for two than for three. We will resist him."

"I am a man of peace, not a brawler," answered the younger man, sullenly. But, nevertheless, at a word from Boggas, he drove Margery forward.

When they were close to the bank the horse-soldier spoke again. "Whom have you got there?" he demanded, sharply.

Boggas looked across the country, and at the brown and purple mountains that lined the west before he answered. His eyes were more reflective than audacious. "A prey of my bow and my spear," he said, his glance still shifting from point to point. "Yea, a Moabitish damsel whom the Lord hath delivered into my hand."

His interrogator's face darkened. "Answer my question," he said, sternly.

"In truth I have. Stay not my comrade and me on our way, lest peradventure a misfortune befall thee."

"Do you not recognize my rank?" asked the officer. "You shall ride the wooden horse for this."

The soldier turned and looked at him, and his manner instantly changed; yet a certain insolence lurked in his tone. "I do now perceive, sir, that you are an officer in Ireton's Horse—brave lads who have not yet ceased to weep for their general's death. Truly this is an accursed land, where the devil and the plague have done their worst."

"Where did you get that girl?" demanded the officer, abruptly.

"I found her not. I am but here helping my friend in his labor. He is an agent appointed by the Commissioners to see to the deportation of the Papist Irish to the Tobacco Islands. I pray thee, friend," he added, suavely, turning to his companion, "tell the officer where you took this maid."

The man gave him a glance, then coughed and cleared his throat. "I had a damnation work in keeping her," he replied. "She hath several times tried to escape, and hath spoken evilly of the Commonwealth. I found her—

why, truly I found her in this wise. She and others have been committed to my charge by the Lord President for embarkation to the Tobacco Isles."

At these words Margery stirred. Then the knowledge that it was but another enemy before whom she stood kept her still and frozen.

The officer glanced at her again. "Remove that scarf," he commanded.

For a moment Boggas hesitated before he slowly unwound it from her mouth.

"Who are you?" came the question from the rider.

She looked up and saw a young man, whose gray eyes met hers from under his montier cap. A crimson sash was wound round the waist of his buff coat; a long sword swung by his side. But to her in her fear he was not human; her eyes only saw one of the terrible soldiers whose swords had bit deep at Drogheda and Wexford. Then almost involuntarily she held up the Transplanter's Certificate, and an ugly light leaped into Boggas's eyes as he saw the officer stoop and take it.

The certificate ran thus:

"Barony of Dartree, Co. of Monaghan. We, the said Commissioners, do hereby certify that

Phelim M'Mahon of Dartree, in the Co. of Monaghan, hath, upon the 19th day of Feb. 1654, in pursuance of a declaration of the Commissioners of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England for the affairs of Ireland, bearing date of the 4th of October 1653, delivered unto us, in writing, the names of himself and of such persons as are to remove with him, with the quantities of their stocks and tillage, the contents whereof are as followeth: The said Phelim M'Mahon, adged sixty years, white haire, tall stature; Lady Margery Ny Guire, his grand-daughter, daughter of the late delinquent and Irish rebel, Conner, Earl of Fermanagh, ld. Vis. Maguire, adged twenty years, flaxen haire, middle stature; Edmund O'Donelly, tenant, adged twenty-five years, brown haire, middle stature; Teage M'Donagh, adged thirty years, brown haire, middle stature; Dermot Regan, adged thirty, middle stature, black haire; Foan Ny Mahony, adged thirty-three years, middle stature, red haire; Nuala Ny Dwyer, adged twenty years, flaxen haire, middle stature. His substance fifty winter acres of corn; cows sixty; forty garrans; three ploughs of*

* Ny or ni, a contraction of *inghean*, a daughter, which in Irish was always prefixed to the surnames of the daughters in a family.

oxen; forty swine, great and small; four geldings; out of which he payeth contribution. The contents whereof we believe to be true."

The officer looked from the paper to the girl. "There are two flaxen-haired women here. Which are you?"

Her eyes fell. "Margery Ny Guire."

"How is it you have fallen out from your party?"

"I fainted," she said, slowly, and her lips trembled.

"To what part of Connaught is your father transplanted?"

"To Erris; but he is dead. He died as we came along."

"His substance is then yours."

"The Commissioners took more than half of it. The rest was taken or died on the road."

There was a pause. "Have you any relation in Ireland?"

She held her head erect. "No. My brother is with the king."

"What portion of Erris was assigned to your grandfather?"

The girl's eyes dilated. "Land where the heather barely covers the rocks. Where there

is neither a house to live in nor soil to be tilled."

This was a very accurate description of Er-ris, as he knew, having lately ridden through its wilds. He made no comment and continued his examination. "When did you fall into the hands of these men?"

"Two hours ago. They forced me to come with them."

All her answers were given in a dreamy, expressionless tone, her voice forming a contrast to the sharp, clear accent of her interrogator. He turned to Boggas, who had already begun to speak. "This damsel is wholly given over to lies," said the soldier, resuming the nasal intonation, "even as Jezebel, the accursed wife of King Ahab. Hearken not to her words, and let my comrade and me continue our way."

"Your name and regiment?" demanded the officer. The man looked boldly into his face.

"Axtell's Regiment of Foot," he answered, with a ring of defiance. "I was sergeant to within a few days ago. My name is Jehu Boggas."

"Then, Jehu Boggas, late sergeant in Axtell's Foot, return whither you have come. If

I mistake not, you will be brought before the drumhead for this."

The man's eyes again darted round the scene and his hand went to the hilt of his sword. Then, quick as thought, he made a step forward, dragging Margery with him.

"Stop!" cried the officer, a sudden fire in his eyes.

Boggas's hand tightened on the girl's, and he forced her on.

"Stay me not!" he cried. "This damsel hath become my lawful spoil, and I will yield her to no man. Reflect that we are two here in this wilderness and you but one. Have I toiled and sweated to have my prey torn from my hands?"

A metallic click followed his words. The officer had drawn and cocked his pistol.

"Listen, rascal," he said, his tone even and cool. "It was a leveller such as you that the Lord Protector shot in front of the army on Triploe Heath. I give you three minutes to recross the bridge. After that, if you are still here, I will blow out your brains."

"Good sir, spare me," cried out the younger man, retreating to the bridge; "I'll be over in a minute. Come, Boggas, good Boggas," he went on, "let the scurvily maid be. Lord!

ain't our lives worth more than a damned Papist wench!"

Seeing himself deserted, the soldier paused and looked from the rider's face to the barrel of the pistol pointed at his head. His eyes were ugly and fierce for a minute; then, with sudden self-control, he dropped Margery's hand and made a salute.

"Since you are one in authority, sir," he said, speaking naturally, "I must fain obey you. But I would let you remember, sir, that, by the decree of the Parliament, any man, woman, or child of the Transplanted Irish found out of the province after the first day of May may be killed without trial or order of magistracy."

He turned and walked back to the bridge, striking his comrade contemptuously on the shoulder as he put his foot on the shaking wickerwork.

"If it were not for your mother I'd run you through, you cursed jack-pudding!" he muttered, and strode on.

The other grinned. "Bless my good mother," he chuckled, as he followed him.

The officer sat still, with his pistol pointed on the bridge till the men had crossed the river. Margery stood where Boggas had left

her, her face white and tearless, as much afraid of her rescuer as she was of the man-catchers. For five minutes neither moved nor spoke. The rattle of the bit and the rush of the water filled the pause. Then the horse-man's eyes fell on the girl.

Her flaxen hair had fallen loose, framing the pallor and misery of her face. He noticed the rich material of her dress, the signs of birth and elegance about her, the present wretchedness of her condition; a second later he looked away and scanned the horizon.

Trees and the winding line of river met his view, and a distant bog, and out towards the west the mountains, with the shadows lying each like a dark-blue cloak in the hollows. Not a sign of life was to be seen. A silence held the land—the silence that follows where sword and fire and the plague have been.

To ride on and leave her to her fate would be a reproach to his manhood. Slave-stealers haunted the kingdom, wolves infested the wilder parts of the country, the province was swept by horrors. Yet he was no knight-errant, nor, under the circumstances, dared be so. How dare he, an English officer in the army of the Commonwealth, take charge of a

girl, a Catholic, an Irishwoman, and one of the damned Transplanted?

He looked at her face again, and their eyes met. With a sudden impulse of fear she turned towards the water, and in a moment he was off his horse and caught her in his arms. She struggled for an instant, then a film crept over her eyes, and she felt herself falling into unfathomed depths, beyond the earth, beyond life.

He laid her on the ground, and drawing a flask of wine from his saddle-bag, put it to her lips. The color came back faintly to her cheeks, and in a few minutes she sat up. He rose to his feet and looked at her.

"Why did you try to take your life?" he said.

She shuddered. "Why should I live?"

"When had you last rest?"

"Yesterday," she answered, sobbing, but without tears. "I have walked or ridden for twenty-four hours."

"Then you must sleep," he said, authoritatively. "Lie under that tree."

She obeyed him in a dazed way. He loosened the girths of his saddle, and, picking up his horse, moved a few yards off to walk up and down by the bank.

Twilight had fallen; a salmon-colored bar of light spread along the edge of the southwest sky, dark-blue clouds swung above, and higher still lay a trail of paling yellow. The singing of the river seemed to swell into a great chorus of song as the night deepened around him.

When the stars danced out he took his cloak from the saddle and spread it over the sleeping girl. For a moment he paused to look at her face; the worn lines it had shown an hour before had gone. Her family, he knew, had been cast out, root and branch. She was an outlaw beyond the Shannon. She had no claim to any shelter on earth but the shelter that the heather and rocks of Erris might give her.

He regretted that she had crossed his path. His manhood demanded that he should feel a measure of sympathy for her; his profession forbade him to do so. It was playing with fire for an English officer to take an interest in an Irishwoman. Soldiers were forbidden to marry the women under the severest penalties. Officers who did so were removed from their command. Intrigues led to a flogging at the limbers of a piece of ordnance for the rank and file, to a court-martial and ruin for their superiors. Yet his duty was clear. He had

recognized it as he paced the bank. He must bring her with him to Tuam to await the will of Sir Charles Coote, the Lord President of Connaught. That man of iron, or the Commissioners, alone had power to settle her fate.

He turned aside, and, lighting his pipe, walked again to and fro till the moon rode high across the sky and the white stream of the Milky Way made a path down the heavens. An hour later, as the girl still slept, he gathered sticks, and, kindling a fire, sat before it with his pistols cocked and ready for any Torie that might appear. The light gleamed on the water, and now and again he heard a salmon leap as it went down stream. It was close upon dawn when she suddenly raised herself on one arm, and stared across the circle of light at her guard.

Her eyes had the strained look of one who was picking up the dropped threads of her life. Presently her gaze cleared, and she laid her head down again. A gleam of firelight touched her hair, and her upraised arm hid her face. For half a minute he looked at her across the glow.

"She will get a chill," he reflected. "I will tell her to come near the fire."

Removing his cap from his head, he rose to

his feet. A stick snapped under his jack-boot, and the girl looked up.

"The grass is damp," said the young man, "and I fear you will fall ill if you lie there longer."

She glanced at him, but made no reply. Her face looked ghost-like in the half-darkness, but he was vaguely conscious of a difference in her—that she was no longer the despairing girl whom he had ordered to sleep. As he stood hesitating, she suddenly rose, letting his cloak fall to the ground. Raising it, he placed it over her shoulders, but, as if unaware of his act, she drew near the fire.

As she knelt before it on one knee, with her hands held towards the heat, he went to his horse and took some bread and meat from his saddle. These he offered her, and for a few minutes she ate, then, with a hurried gesture, put the food aside. "It chokes me," she said, as if to herself.

He poured out some wine, and she took a mouthful, and in the same agitated manner put the cup from her. A moment later she raised her hand to push back her hair, and accidentally touched the cloak. She looked closer at it and took it off.

"Why do you do that?" he asked.

"It hath been where my people have been killed," she replied, with a shiver.

He threw a glance at her face. The girl was staring into the fire, her eyes fires themselves. To her he was not so much a man as something unhuman; one of the army that had eaten up the land, whose swords had never turned back at the cry of Irish woman or child. Their position—alone in the wilds, in the heart of the night—had not struck her, he saw.

"In another hour," he presently remarked, "I must ride on."

"You can go now," she said, briefly.

"We will wait for the dawn."

She started, and her eyes turned upon him.

"Do you take me with you?" Her tone was indignant, protesting.

"Can I leave you here?" he answered.

"The wolves—the man-catchers—ah! But where do you take me?"

"My squadron lies in Tuam," he said. "I am on my way thither."

Her lips quivered, a color rushed over her face. For a moment she tried to command herself, then she broke down.

"No, no!" she said, passionately. "Not there! I cannot face those cruel men!"

He knew she meant the Lord President and the Loughrea Commissioners. He also knew that it was his duty to see that she appeared before them. He turned his head aside and was silent.

"My brother is in France," she sobbed. "Let me go to him! Oh that you were any other man than the man you are! Then truly I would implore you on my knees to help me to escape."

His hand twitched his mustache as he kept his face averted.

"What will they do with me?" Her voice was a sob. Rising suddenly, he went towards his horse, and busied himself tightening the girths and putting the bit in the animal's mouth. Once he looked back and saw her still on one knee, with the red light dancing on her figure. Of another race, and in England, he might dare to help her; here she was an outlaw, and he and every man in the regiment had to see that such as she were driven across the Shannon and penned in between the two-mile lines.

"'Twas a cursed mischance that brought her in my way," he thought, and he looked towards the river with an iron resolve to do his duty.

When he returned to the fire she stood up-

right and faced him steadily. She had wiped her tears away, and there was resolution and courage in her eyes. A faint light was springing in the sky, the white gray of dawn touched the river.

"Sir—I do not know your name," she began, proudly—"since you will bring me to Tuam, I must go with you, you being a man and the stronger."

There was a fine contempt in her tone, and they looked straight into each other's face. The creeping light told him that his capture was fair, and her that her enemy was handsome and young. Yet she only thought of the racial gulf between them, the blood that had flowed wherever he and his troopers had ridden, while he wondered at the darkness of her eyes when her hair was so fair. For a few seconds he did not speak.

"My name is Piers Ottley," he said. "I am a major of Horse. It is true when I say, Lady Margery, I had rather this duty had fallen to another man. What influence I have shall be used to see you are treated with consideration."

She bowed coldly, and, moving away, he stood by the bridge till a flame of pink light sprang up in the east, then he unpicketed his horse.

II

HE led the animal up to the girl, who was leaning against the tree with her hands hanging by her side. She saw him put his cloak over the war-saddle before he turned to mount her.

"I will walk," she said, fearing that she was to ride pillion.

He made no answer, and with his hand on the bridle led the horse forward, passing the bridge, which looked too rotten to bear the hoofs. Margery followed him slowly, immature plans of escape rushing through her mind. A quarter of a mile farther they came to a ford, and he halted and looked back.

"We must cross here," he remarked. Her face grew agitated, for she thought the moment had come when she must ride with him. But Ottley lifted her into the saddle, observing that for the present he should lead the horse. The next minute the water was rushing past his jack-boots and the animal's hocks. The long, floating grasses caught in his spurs as he

waded through the stream with the eddies circling away in lessening paths from hoofs and feet. Once he threw a glance across his shoulder, and found that she had seized the moment to say a prayer on a rosary of tiny gold beads. He had a brief vision of lowered eyes and moving lips before he looked away. To do his duty he knew he should snatch the rosary from her hand; and he was glad when, a minute later, he heard the beads rattle together as she hid them in her dress.

The sun had risen through the red light of the dawn as they climbed the opposite bank; pearly clouds, pink-tipped, flecked the brightening blue, and the smell of flowers was in the air. Once beyond the patter of the river, a curious silence surrounded them. No birds sang in the thickets, or wild animals crossed their path. The land seemed cursed and blighted by a spell.

Now and again Margery's eyes fell on her companion. He was the arbiter of her fate for the day, and she tried to separate the soldier from the man. Ghosts, however, followed him; pale faces, the dead of Drogheda and Wexford, and those to whom quarter had been denied in the storm of castles. Each time she shuddered and looked away.

Once or twice he spoke to her, but her answers were so brief that they fell into silence. Thus they went on through woods, by bogs, and across broken, uncultivated ground, where the track of the plough and spade of five years back could still be seen. Roofless houses with blackened walls and ruined churches met them here and there. Once a wan-faced peasant crossed their path, who fled into the wood at the sight of the English soldier. Bodies swung from trees, or had fallen in mouldering heaps under the branches, and everywhere the fury of a foe and the effects of the plague might be traced.

By noon they reached a wilder stretch of country, which showed no sign of former habitation, and entered a hollow where patches of moss pushed through the stunted grass. The slope was covered by clumps of gorse with blackthorn bushes growing among the furze, and here Ottley drew up the horse.

In front the ground rose in a ridge, the top being crowned by an ancient earthwork hedged with a ring of hawthorn and brier. From the hollow nothing but the sky could be seen beyond the fort.

“We shall rest here,” he said, turning and facing the girl.

She met his eyes, and they looked to her cool and hard. A fresh thought seized her; he was still an agent of darkness, but he was also human as well. Though he had no pity upon her, she would not be afraid, she said to herself, to match her wit with his.

"Am I to alight?" she asked.

"As you will," he replied.

She sat hesitating for a moment, then slid from the saddle, and he loosened the girth and removed the bit. Taking the last of the food from the saddle-bag, he filled her a cup of wine. They ate, standing side by side, in silence, while a lark rose close at hand out of the moss and set the air thrilling. Presently he glanced at her face, and the look it wore made him speak.

"You shall be provided for. I pass you my word," he said, and paused lamely. The lie, he knew, was so evident that he felt he had been a fool to say anything. The color sprang to her face. The note of feeling struck her as insolence. She stood very straight, and her eyes grew haughty; then she moved away.

He watched her as she slowly crossed the hollow and went up the ridge, and for the twentieth time wished himself relieved of his duty. If he had not met Boggas she would have gone to share the fate of hundreds of

women as fair as herself. The alternative he had brought her was grim enough. Providence had not dealt kindly with him in throwing such a task on his shoulders; and, leaning his arm on the saddle, he again hardened his heart.

Meanwhile hers beat in fear and indignation as she made her way up the slope to the fort. Insults were new experiences to her. Not so long ago she had had swordsmen enough to defend her with their lives; but they were now among the forty thousand Irish soldiers who had carried their arms abroad. After a time, as her passion died down, she remembered the man-catchers. The thought of Boggas and his fellows made her eyes grow grave, and she stood hesitating for a minute at the base of the fort. Ottley, she knew, was still in sight. His sword and pistol had saved her, and would save her again as long as she was under his protection; and she stamped her foot at the certainty of the fact. Then she went on, accepting his guard, and climbed through an opening in the hedge. Within the circle she stood on the roof of caves, and the hawthorns ringed her round. Pagan kings had built rude palaces here; and she was conscious of a vague, haunting feeling of dim presences as she slow-

ly crossed the mound. Below her, in the rath, the warriors slept each by his horse, who were to spring up with drawn swords when the hour had come. But the tramp of the Ironsides had not reached their ears in that deep, enchanted sleep.

On the other side the ridge sloped to an open space of grass land, bordered on the left, within a hundred yards of the fort, by a deep wood. A bog lay to the west, sending a tongue of its brown heather into this grass. Margery crossed to the outer ring and drew back a branch. Hardy plans of running away from Ottley, of hiding in a cave, seeking the famished peasants in the mountains, flitted through her brain. But the two gray shadows, the man-catchers and the wolves, fell ominously across each hope.

As she stood looking round the wild, unpeopled land, she heard sounds coming from the wood, and in a moment was ready poised for flight—flight back to Ottley. But in another minute her fears lessened as she saw a body of men break through the undergrowth, and recognized their dress. They formed into a double line, and marched half-way across the open ground, where they drew up, fifty men or more. The sunlight danced on their bare

heads and long, saffron-colored kilted garbs, and on a steel corselet gleaming here and there. She drew a long breath as her eyes ran down their ranks; then her heart leaped at the sight. She was looking at a parade of the Tories, disbanded soldiers who had fought under Owen Roe O'Neil, with Preston, with Ormond. Her father and brother had commanded such men. They were her friends. She could see their fierce, eager faces under their glibbes; she knew that for a time the wilds hid them, that the fate of a wolf awaited each man if caught. Then all in an instant she remembered Ottley. These men would think it a very sacred duty to thrust a pike through his body or cut his throat with a skene.

The next second she understood why they had drawn up beneath the fort. A man dressed like a shepherd rose, as it seemed, out of the ground and went down to them. As he drew near both lines sank on their knees, and the few steel caps worn were thrown on the ground. The girl instantly knelt.

For a few moments she tried to feel a devotional spirit, but a sword hung over the scene. If Ottley entered the fort he might have the wisdom not to interfere, but he would mark the place, the men, the priest, and in a day or

two bring a troop of horse to the spot. On the other hand, if the outlaws saw him his fate was sealed.

It appeared to her their lives, and the life of the Ironside, lay in her hands. The latter deserved to die, no doubt; the swords of him and his fellows had been red to the hilt with Irish blood, but it was not for her to betray him to his end. She must prevent the meeting; she must keep him in the hollow for twenty minutes. By that time mass would be over, the priest once more hidden, and the Tories in the wood.

The certainty of some violent deed if she did not act set her wits to work. She was of the old Irish blood, an earl's daughter, and though she feared the English troopers as devils, scorned them, too, in her pride of birth. Yet she knew she had but one power to move what might be left of the man in Ottley. That was her beauty. Up to that moment it had had no effect upon him. Twice his eyes had told her that he saw it, but his admiration had not made him swerve from what he thought was his duty. He had refused to connive at her escape; he was bringing her straight into the hands of her enemies. Her face flooded with color.

"I must go down to him," she thought.
"O God! how I hate and scorn him!"

She gave one more glance at the kneeling men, and trembled lest they should salute the Host.* But no shout came up the hillside, and she hurried across the fort. Ottley was still leaning against his horse. As she came slowly down the slope, treading her way round the furze, he was struck by the changed expression of her face. Her lips seemed ready to smile, her eyes had softened. Pausing in a circle of gorse, her gaze met his across the hollow, and the look he read there made him stand suddenly erect.

Taking his horse by the bridle, he went to meet her. As he drew near a faint color crept over her face, spreading to the roots of her hair, and she looked at the gorse. He paused outside the ring, and there was a brief interval of silence. Then, all in an instant, his eyes hardened, and, turning sharply aside, he adjusted the bit. The clink of steel made her raise her head.

* Formerly, as the priest raised the wafer above his head, the congregation bowed and cried out, "*Mile fálte, Críod na Slanaightheoir*" (A thousand welcomes, Christ, our Saviour).

"I pray, sir, that I may rest yet awhile," she said.

"Certainly," he answered. "While you wait here I will see what lies beyond the circle."

"Wait with me," she asked, almost in a whisper.

He threw the reins over a blackthorn bush, and gazed straight at her across the barrier of gorse. Fifteen minutes before she had left his side in proud indignation, now her eyes smiled at him above the yellow blossoms. He began to weigh this fact and criticise; suddenly he found himself wishing to meet them again.

She saw her moment's victory, and her face opened like a flower. But while her lips quivered into a smile, all her faculties were on the alert for any sound that might arouse his suspicion. For a few seconds his gaze answered to hers, then he recovered himself, and began to move past the ring. The girl's blood ran cold; she plucked a thorny blossom and held it towards him.

"See!" she cried, "how sweet it smells!"

He paused and took it; a bead of blood was on her finger where a thorn had pierced the flesh.

"'Tis very sweet," said Ottley, "and the color of your hair—but you have hurt yourself."

She looked down at the red drop and smiled again. From under her lashes she saw him put the flower in a button-hole. In her heart she said, with passion, "All my blood would I give to save them. All my blood!"

"You have changed," he said, suddenly. "Were you afraid of me?"

The corners of her lips dimpled. "'Twas only natural in a captive," she answered.

The words had an effect other than she intended. He remembered that to forget she was one of the Transplanted, and an Irish-woman, might be his ruin. She saw the light, careless smile pass from his lips.

A feeling of horror again seized her as he made a step forward.

"Oh, sir, do not leave me!" Her voice thrilled with emotion. "How do I know but those most evilly-minded men, the man-catchers, are near?"

The appeal detained him for a moment, but his eyes were cold and controlled as he looked at her. She knew what the change in his manner meant. The cold-blooded Saxon had put his duty before a fair face. An icy chill fell on her heart. She felt driven on.

"Wait, wait!" she pleaded again. With a white face she leaned across the gorse, her hands

clasped, her eyes uplifted. Suddenly a flame of scarlet rushed to her cheeks, and she held up her lips. Ottley looked at her for a moment, astonishment in his gaze. Then he bent to take the kiss.

"Pretty one, that is not fair!" he exclaimed, as she drew back, breaking into a smile.

"Yes, yes," she said, "most fair. If you wish to claim it, do so in twenty minutes. But you must stay there!—there, outside this gorse. You must not go up to the fort! No! I am afraid of the man-catchers. Would you leave me alone to be carried away by them? Truly, that were a brave act!"

She spoke fast, but her tone was clear with a music, a challenge, an appeal in it that kept him to the spot. He drew out his watch; if she had had a sword in her hand she could have killed him then. The sale of her lips to an Ironside was an unutterable sacrifice. All the youth went out of her eyes.

Suddenly it struck him that she was playing a part. The proud girl was the real one, not this willing maid. There was something she did not wish him to know, a discovery she had made from the fort. He was being fooled; the girl's wit was sharper than his own. He

began to regret his folly in catching fire from a pair of eyes and selling the moments.

During that interval she suffered an agony of suspense as she listened through the singing of the larks. Her fancy saw the hands of the watch creeping forward, and again and again she feared the sum of the minutes was told. Then she blessed the ancient hill, and thanked the kings that had built their fort so high. This man's life might go! It was not for it she cared; but he should not bring his devils to destroy her people!

Suddenly she saw him return his watch to his coat, and the next second he leaned across the gorse. Shame and appeal leaped into her eyes, and at the look the cool insolence in his instantly passed. Standing erect, he raised his hand in salute, and a moment later, snatching his pistols from the holsters, ran up the hill.

The girl wrung her hands and broke into a sob. She forgot that he had spared her in her fear lest the time she had bought had been too short. Every life on the other side had the value of a wolf's in his eyes, and she had failed to save the men.

Leaving the ring of gorse, she knelt and prayed. But material fears had clutched her imagination, and her petition died away in

thrills of terror. Ages and æons seemed to pass before she heard the ring of his spurs coming down the springy grass; and she sprang to her feet at the sound, not daring to look at him.

He went straight to his horse, returned the pistols to the holsters, and gathered up the reins. As he moved about the animal she found courage to throw an oblique glance at his face. It wore an inscrutable look, and there was no trace of alarm in his manner. Her confidence returned with a bound; she hoped that he had seen neither the priest nor the men.

The gladness in her heart shone in her eyes; but relief from the greater fear gave her time to think. Her cheeks grew hot, and she shook the loosened strands of her hair over her forehead, while he led the horse across the hollow.

When he paused and looked back she walked forward as if signalled, and her whole frame trembled with shame and anger as he lifted her into the saddle. Neither spoke till her eyes fell on the flower in his button-hole.

"Give it me!" she said, imperiously, pointing to the blossom.

His hand was on the bridle-rein, and he

looked up at the pink, flushed face that showed through the yellow threads of hair.

"Am I to have nothing?" he asked.

"Nothing, nothing!" she answered, her hand held out.

He gave it, and, tearing the flower in two, she flung it from her.

The meaning of the act was plain, and he understood it. The incident was over; to be forgotten, abolished from their minds. He saw the curves of her lips melt into a smile of triumph as she looked down, but her cheeks were still pink as the dawn.

They left the hollow, and she noted that he led the horse northward. The Tories lay behind them in the wood to the east. A shadow of uncertainty darkened her gladness; and when, some distance farther on, he paused on a rise and looked back, her doubts increased. There was a keenness in his gaze as it swept the country that made her anxious. She longed to read his heart, to find out how much he knew, and every now and then, as she glanced at him, the youth and hardness of his face, as seen in profile, struck her afresh. They crossed level wooded ground, passing under great oaks, and over fields that had lain unsown for four years, coming, an hour later,

upon a track that led up a wild, rock-strewn hill. During those sixty minutes no words had passed their lips. Whither he was going she could only vaguely guess; Tuam, he had told her, was their destination, but it would be impossible to reach it that day. When half-way up the hill a shout attracted their attention, and Ottley drew his pistol as he looked back. Two men on garrans were climbing the hill, whose brown, Puritan suits showed them to be English Adventurers. One of them spurred forward, bawling as he came—"A welcome meeting, sir!" he cried out to Ottley. "A right welcome meeting! Not an hour too soon, sir, not an hour too soon! A party of your men are lying at my house. I pray, master officer, if it be the promise of a troop of horse? In truth, brave sir, our lives be in grievous danger."

"Can you give me a mount?" said Ottley, with a brief salute.

The Adventurer turned to his servant. "Jeremy can give you his garran," he answered. "I will let him take pillion with me."

"Why are you alarmed?" asked Ottley, presently, when he had mounted, and the party were near the top of the ridge.

"Alarmed! Truly at theft and murder.

Doth the Lord President know of our instant peril? Those damnable Tories are abroad."

The war-horse was abreast of the garran, and a treble voice exclaimed, "Oh, sir, you shock me! I thought you Puritan gentlemen never swore."

The man glanced at the travel-stained dress, the girl's loosened hair, and white, smiling face.

"When a skene's at your throat, mistress, and your beeves are carried off, a good man may be pardoned for dallying with Satan. Sir, doth the Lord President know?"

And the girl, still acting, found the nerve to turn her smiling eyes on Ottley. He met them against his will, and his own gaze mastered hers. The reins, hanging slack in her hands, were suddenly tightened, and as her horse fell back she heard his answer.

"Sir Charles knows all that may concern the province," he said, his tone cool and indifferent.

"In case he doth not," replied the Adventurer, "and it may be so he doth not, I will take the chance of your escort and go with you to Tuam."

Ottley made no reply, and the party rode down into the plain. An hour's ride brought them to cultivated land surrounding a large

house with flanking towers. Five or six troopers drinking usquebaugh were lounging on settles by the gateway; they seized their arms and rose to their feet at the sound of hoofs, and, on seeing Ottley, saluted.

"What is this?" he said to the sergeant, a grim-looking man.

"An escort, sir. We were in charge of two munition wagons for Colonel Faire's Foot. Trooper Noy did but wander a few yards off at a halt. We found him three hours afterwards, by the sun, with his throat cut and a pike thrust in his breast."

Ottley's face darkened.

"We brought him hither and buried him, and the Lord gave me words for a prayer, so he doth not lie like a dog. A man we caught—a wolf of a peasant—told us, as far as we could make out his tongue, that the Tories do daily increase. We took a bridle-rein and swung him up on a tree."

"Halt here till to-morrow," said Ottley, briefly, and he rode into the yard. The Adventurer was already off his horse, and clamor of dogs filled the place. One of the servants had led Margery's horse up to the door, where a woman stood in the entrance. She took the girl's hand as she alighted, and led her into

the house. A few words told her her position.

"Come in and rest," she said. "In truth, I did have qualms myself at sight of those we turned out of this house and land. But it is for the cleansing of the country."

The girl bathed and lay down and slept. In the stone-flagged parlor beneath her room Ottley sat and listened to the stories of raids and murders that were poured into his ear. He said little, though his eyes showed a keen attention, the coolness of his manner forming a contrast to the wrath and fear of the Adventurer.

Early next morning he got his men together, and, after a hasty breakfast, the party started. Margery rode a garran; the woman of the house had eyed her oddly at parting, and asked if the major counted more years than his appearance warranted her in thinking. The girl had answered that she did not concern herself with the youth or age of an English trooper, and had whipped up her garran. The Adventurer accompanied the party, keeping, for the sake of security, close to Margery, for three soldiers rode before her and three behind, the sergeant bringing up the rear, while Ottley headed the band.

They rode fast through a thin mist of rain. White shafts of light shot downward here and there from beneath the gray clouds, and touched the web-like vapor as it hung on the slopes. The bogs were beaded with rain-drops, and the mud lay deep on the track. Once, as they mounted a grassy upland, they came across a belated train of the Transplanted, whose cattle had stopped to graze. The men's and women's figures loomed out miserably in the fine rain as Ottley halted to question them. Their alarmed eyes followed the soldiers when they presently rode on ; to Margery it seemed as if she had looked at her own agony.

At noon Ottley ordered a halt, and the party alighted and ate their rations under a few trees. As she saw the sergeant glance impatiently at her, it struck the girl that the halt had been called on her account. Ottley stood by his horse, his gloved hand on the saddle. He did not look in Margery's direction, nor did he address her. She was glad, not knowing that he remembered that his men's eyes were upon him. The Adventurer, in a fever of impatience, kept staring through the trees, crying out now and then about an onfall of the Tories and the dangers of a halt. All their throats were in danger, he declared,

and it was madness to delay. As Ottley laughed at his fears, Margery saw the sergeant frown.

"The snares of a strange woman," she heard him say, and knew his eyes were upon her.

After an hour's rest they mounted and rode forward. Evening was closing in when they crossed the Clare and reached the gates of the town. The rain had stopped, but pale curtains of mist hung in the air. The sun had gone down in a coppery sky, and the walls and roofs of the houses were dank with moisture. As the guard turned out, and strange, hard faces stared up at Margery, the girl shivered.

The sergeant led the men to their quarters in the cathedral, Ottley sitting still on his horse till the party had filed away. Then he turned to the officer in charge of the guard.

"Hath Sir Charles come?" he asked.

"A packet hath been delivered to the Commandant, wherein it is said that he will not be here till next week," answered the cornet.

Ottley glanced at Margery, who sat dumb and waiting in her saddle. The cornet's eyes followed his.

"This lady must be lodged," said Ottley.

"She is the daughter of the late Earl of Fermanagh."

The cornet frowned. He was one of the New Model, and, as a trooper, had seen Naseby. "Let her lodge at Coman's, then," he said. "Shall I send a guard with her?"

There was an instant's pause, too brief for the cornet to notice. "I will see her lodged myself," said Ottley, as if giving an order, and wheeled his horse round. The garran followed of its own accord, for the girl's reins hung loose on its neck. She saw the frowning face of the old soldier raised towards her, the hard, steady stare of the men, and felt the shame of a captive. When Ottley glanced at her face he saw it proud and set under her hat. There was solicitude in his tone as he spoke. "Coman is a respectable woman," he said. "She will treat you well till Sir Charles can judge your case."

There was no reply, and they rode on in silence down the street till, turning a corner, they came to a large house built of limestone which stood apart from the hovels. The name "Coman" was painted in red letters on the sign-board; the sound of a river could be heard in the rear.

"This is the house," he said, and alighted. When he turned to the girl she was already

on the ground, so, taking the lead, he entered the tavern, where a russet-faced, cow-eyed woman met them on the threshold. Ottley explained his errand, and they went into the kitchen. While he addressed the woman in a lowered tone the girl drew aside and leaned listlessly by the deep-sunk window. One or two of his words reached her ears.

The woman's answer came clear and loud. "Truly, I will do my best," she said. "You soldiers all know that Jennet Coman hath never failed of her word."

Ottley turned to Margery; he raised his cap. "I trust you will be comfortably lodged," he said.

She bowed without answering; his presence filled her with shame, anger, and pain. He went to the door, then looked back. "I wish you good-night, Lady Margery."

The cow-eyed woman thought, "Doth he want her to look up?"

The girl stirred, but her eyes kept on the ground. "I wish you good-night, sir—I forget your name." The words came slowly, with a ring of fine indifference in them.

Ottley put on his cap and went out. A second later the woman heard her name called and ran to the door. "Oh, sir, I guessed you

would wish private speech with me," she panted. "But doubt me not, I'll guard the Popish maid."

"She is under the Commissioners' charge," he said, with the air of a man who thought nothing of his subject. "They wish her treated with every honor. Here is money to be spent upon her wants." He held out a purse. "You will be careful to get her all that she needs."

"Ah, then they will deal with her well," said the woman, and looked impressed. Ottley caught the reins of the garran, and, swinging across his own horse, rode away. It was only as he turned the corner of the street that she recalled that she had never heard of the Commissioners showing such generosity before. "Come up-stairs," she said to the girl, on entering the kitchen. "I trow you will be glad of food and rest."

As they climbed the ladder-like stair a voice singing shrilly suddenly filled the upper part of the house.

"What a harsh song!" murmured Margery, her hand dragging on the banister.

"'Tis the Singing Woman," answered Mistress Coman. "She hath been lodging here two days."

III

THE latticed window in Margery's room looked down on the little stream that ran through the town. Each day as she sat by it she could see the townswomen as they came to beat their clothes upon the stepping-stones. The voices of the Adventurers and the soldiers often rose noisily to the joistings as they talked in the room below, and across the passage the songs of the Singing Woman floated frequently to her ears.

One afternoon, when she had been four days in the town, an unusual silence in the house encouraged her to leave her room. Rest and food had restored her nerve, and the blood ran like wine in her veins. Body and spirit rebelled against the blackness around her; her youth claimed its right to be glad. Somewhere she felt that the sun shone, and she asked for a ray of its glory across her path.

The silence continued as she went down the stair, and even the voice of the Singing Woman was still. A door that led into a room off

the kitchen stood ajar, and a ribbon of yellow light streamed through.

As she opened the door she could see across the room into the kitchen. Jennet Coman was working there, but on hearing the girl's footstep she left her task and came hastily forward. Margery sank on the wide window-seat in the flood of the sunshine. "Sweet Jennet, when shall I be free?" she asked.

The woman placed her hands on her stout hips and looked interrogatingly at the face raised towards her. Her eyes were not unkindly. "Ah, maid, I cannot tell. You are but a charge in my hand till the will of the Lord President be known."

The girl turned and looked out. Across the water, across the fields, she saw the golden ball of the setting sun. It was going down to greet the thousands of Irish slaves that labored in the fever islands, she thought. "I will have joy!" she said to herself. "I will die before they send me there."—"Do they mean to send me over the sea?" she said, aloud.

Mistress Coman shook her head. "No, my lady, no. You are an earl's daughter—though he was but mere Irish and a Papist to boot, and bloody, no doubt. The Commissioners

will give you your grant. Look what grace they have shown you. That sober kirtle and white collar you wear came out of their purse."

Margery rose impatiently. "I will have none of their grace!" she said. "O God! I would I could go to my brother."

She knew well that no grace would be shown her, that none was shown the Irish, whether they were of the old English blood or the native Celt. Noblemen with their wives and children had to leave their homes and march when the order came as well as men of meaner birth. She drew near the table and looked at Jennet. "Help me to escape," she said. "I fear these soldiers."

"Fear! They have cleansed this evil land, which was given over to Papistry and rebellion. Tut, tut! talk not to me of escape, for truly I am an honest woman and fear the Commissioners. It fills your head with meagrimms to sit idle in your room. Look at these kerchiefs. Put the smoothing-iron over them as you will."

"Yes, I will," answered Margery. "Get me the iron."

The order amused rather than offended her. Her quick changes of mood had helped her to face with courage the very certain dangers that

now met her daily. She took the smoothing-iron and forgot that but a few months before she had been served as a queen.

As she worked, Mistress Coman returned to the kitchen. In the stream a woman was beating clothes, and the dull thud of her stick mingled with the patter of the water. After a while a party of soldiers entered the tavern and tramped into the inner room. They stared with bold, curious glances at Margery.

"Ale, good Jennet, ale," cried one, who wore a feather in his cap. "And if you have any aqua vitæ or usquebaugh, bring it hither also. We have business before us, and it will refresh the body."

"I warrant you mean the grants," returned the woman, as she put a great stone jug, a bottle, and some coarse delf mugs on the window-ledge. "Is it true that your officers have peeled you fools bare?"

"Truly they have taken us at a disadvantage and looked to their own profit. Being for the most part men of substance, they could bear to wait for the payment of their arrears, while we rank and file were driven to sell our grants for a song. Major Ormsby hath the stomach of a cormorant, and I doubt not that the sergeant we meet here anon be his agent."

"Well, well, you be fools!" said Mistress Coman, and went back to the kitchen.

Margery continued her work without looking up, feeling indifferent to the men. While they smoked and drank and eyed her, she was conscious of no common link of humanity between herself and them.

"Your hands take not a natural grip of the iron, wench," one of the soldiers presently remarked.

She looked up for a second. The gulf of rank, race, religion, separated her from the speaker. "Oh, I hold it well enough," she answered, in a tone of absolute indifference.

The man leaned forward with his arms on his knees.

"Look at us again, maid," he said, gazing straight into her face. "How comes it that your eyes are black when your hair is yellow?"

"Leave the wench alone," growled a bullet-headed, solemn-looking man. "We have come here for business, not for dalliance."

"Trooper Pumcry hath a carnal spirit," put in another soldier. "I warn you, young man, that your feet draw near to the pit when you give word and retort to a wanton Popish damsel. We spared not such as she at the Cross of Wexford."

"I was not there," said the young trooper. "I have no stomach for killing women."

Margery's hand left the iron and she stood upright. The men's words recalled her to the dark certainties of her life. A look of horror and aversion sprang into her eyes. She turned to leave the room.

"I cry your pardon, mistress," called out the trooper. "I did not know you were the Irish earl's daughter whom my major took from the man-catchers. 'Pon my soul I thought you were Jennet's niece. My words were free, but there was no offence meant."

She paused and faced the soldiers. "Your words, man, were nothing to me." Her voice was low but distinct. "I pardon your ignorance; but it is these men, your fellows, whom I loathe to look upon."

"And wherefore, woman?" demanded the bullet-headed man. "I doubt not but you are a true daughter of the whore of Babylon."

"I loathe you because, in the name of God, you have murdered my people! Because I remember Tredagh and Wexford!"

The man's hand went to his sword and he half rose. Pumcry stretched out his arm. "No, no," he said; "would you strike a woman for her words? Mistress, if you wish to

stay, stay. I can hold Private Grimshaw in ward so that he treat my major's captive with due respect."

She had laid her hand on the handle of the door, and felt that some one else had taken it on the outside. It was thrust back, and a quiver ran through her body as she saw the new-comer. He looked at her without surprise or recognition, while the soldiers burst into a storm of greeting.

"Ha, my brave sergeant! here we are, ready to be plucked. Come forward! come forward! Whose purse do you carry? Major Ormsby's? By my soul, he will pocket the province."

"It is laid on my mind," exclaimed Private Grimshaw, "that this be a matter wherein we should ask the guidance of Heaven. Let us cast lots that we may know whose voice shall be lifted up."

"Not Boggas!" cried out Pumcry. "He is a damnable thief, and will not give us more than two-and-six an acre."

The new-comer advanced up the room, passing Margery without a glance. "Young man," he said, looking at the trooper, "I call you to order. Colonel Axtell, in whose Foot I carried a musket, would have made you ride the wooden horse for a slighter word."

"Ah, he was a brave man," sneered the trooper. "He ordered his men to fire into the women's gallery at the trial of Charles Stuart. I am of a mind you were not there, for no one obeyed him."

"Silence!" cried the bullet-headed man. "I will take what fair price Sergeant Boggas may offer. I have no stomach to drain, and till, and sow, and cut down forestry in this most accursed land. Nay, my soul yearns for the peace and plenty of my native Sussex."

Margery hurried from the room, not daring to look back. She felt Boggas's eyes upon her. As she went up the stair she began to wonder what the man had been doing in the house. He had entered the room by the inner door, not by the kitchen, and must therefore have been already in the tavern. Her heart beat fast, but though his unexpected presence frightened her, she knew that she had no real cause for alarm. She was under Jennet's charge, and he dared not kidnap her. That hard-eyed young major, too, no doubt would prevent his carrying out any evil design.

Near the last step of the stair she suddenly heard the shrill song of the Singing Woman. Mistress Hunnings's room looked out on the street, and lay down the passage. Jennet had

told the girl that in her youth the Singing Woman had been famous for her voice, and had sung before King James. She sang still, though all her notes were cracked, because the habit had become so strong. Margery, who was accustomed to her singing, took no heed of her song as she lingered on the stair. All her thoughts dwelt upon Boggas.

Presently the harsh notes ceased, softly slippered feet came down the passage, then a figure stole round the corner. The girl looked up to see a tall old woman staring at her, who held herself as straight as a girl in her teens. Her iron-gray hair was smoothed under a close-fitting white cap; her level, penetrating eyes had the power of youth.

"Come on! come on!" she called out, as Margery stopped short on the step.

"Your song has ended," said the girl. "Give me the favor of hearing it again." She went up as she spoke; the graciousness of a great lady came into her manner.

The woman drew back, retreating slowly down the passage, staring all the while.

"I sang before a king once, daughter of a savage, bloody Irish earl," she answered, "but it may be I shall find a song for you yet," and she went into her room, slamming the door

behind her, leaving Margery with a vague feeling of alarm. The girl ran to her own apartment and looked out of the window.

The stick still fell in rhythmical beats on the clothes, answered by a soft echo. The washer-woman's brown kirtle and saffron-colored petticoat could be seen as her long cloak swung back. As Margery leaned over the sill she broke into a song in Gaelic, keeping time to her words with every stroke of her stick:

*"To the daughter of the race of Conn,
To the Chief's daughter.
Oh, maid with hair like the sun,
With the eyes of power,
There's black grief on the plain,
And death in the house on the Robe—
The house stolen from a true child of Connacht."*

Suddenly the woman raised her eyes to the window and repeated slowly:

"To the Chief's daughter."

The next second the lattice beneath was flung wide, and one of the soldiers roared out: "Take your clothes and your song away, you hellicate witch! Begone! and pollute not our ears with thy salvage language, singing chants to Satan."

In a trice the singer gathered up her linen, and, without another glance at Margery, waded through the water and went up the bank.

It was a message, but the interpretation was not clear. There was danger around her, the girl saw, but how great she could not guess. Her fears now dwelt on the sentence the ruthless Lord President might give. As she stood by the window she felt an imperious need that her youth should have its rights. Yet every outlook showed those rights denied. There was one hope left, and she set it before her as a star. The Irish held their rendezvous at Brest, and if she could escape she would find kind hearts there. A warm glow of courage seized her as she determined to make the attempt.

The next day she spoke to Jennet when the woman brought her her meal. "Hath your Lord President come?" she asked.

Each day she had put this question, and each day the tavern-keeper had answered, "He hath not." But to-day Jennet said: "He will be here come a Wednesday. Truly he will give righteous judgment, have no fear."

The soldiers were quartered in the cathedral built by Turlough, the king. They had broken

the great Cross of O'Hoissin, the abbot, and defaced the walls of the chancel, stabling their horses under Turlough's triumphal arch. Their officers were lodged for the most part in the priory of St. John the Baptist ; and there, one rainy morning, men belonging to horse and foot were gathered in what had been the refectory of the canons regular. A long table ran down the middle of the room ; benches and chairs were ranged before it and round the walls. Three deep Gothic windows lighted the place. Sword-belts, bandeliers, and arms hung from numerous racks. Four or five men with attentive faces were leaning forward on a bench by one of the recesses, listening to an officer, who, with an open Bible in his hand, was expounding from Joshua. Another group of men stood farther down by the arched doorway leading into the hall. Ottley was among this party. Alert, handsome, and well-ordered, he leaned by the arch, his eyes almost insolent in their indifference as he turned them upon the officer nearest to him.

“Do you still hold to your purpose to make this report, Major Ottley?” this man asked, with sudden abruptness. He looked over forty, and had severe, dark eyes, dilated nostrils, and carried his sword-arm in a sling.

The reply was instantly given with decision. "Yes, Major Ormsby."

"Then, young man, yours is a fool's errand. This soldier hath got his discharge, and hath gone to take up his grant."

He passed through the archway, beckoning Ottley to follow. After a moment's hesitation the latter obeyed, his long sword clanking on the flags as he went out. The door at the end of the hall opened on the street, and a number of persons were to be seen gathered near the entrance, before which a sentry paced.

The senior officer drew up.

"Major Ottley," he said, lowering his voice, "believe me, this is a matter wherein caution is necessary. Sir Charles himself hath bought up many grants. This man, Boggas, is a valuable agent and knows how to get the soldiery to part with theirs at a low price. Moreover" — here the officer straightened himself — "I can answer for his character. He is a man of godly repute, a keen swordsman, and was not slack in the avenging of the massacred Protestants at Tredagh and Wexford."

Ottley's face was rigid, his eyes inflexible. "The matter is out of my hands," he said, with a cold unconcern. "I made my report to Colonel Hewson an hour after my arrival

in the town. By this time Sir Charles has heard it."

The elder man smiled grimly as Ottley turned away, and his strident voice followed him down the hall. "A word, sir!" he said, in a loud, distinct tone. "I would give you a caution. You are twenty-seven, and I am thirteen years your senior. We are here to do the work of the Lord, and to slay and spare not. He that went after Ashtaroth hid not his sin, for the God of vengeance found him and he died by the death of stones. Wherefore I would warn you."

Ottley wheeled round, and his eyes looked with cold defiance straight at the major. Then his glance fell on the latter's disabled sword-hand. The gaze was significant, and the elder officer, with an angry frown, moved away. Ottley walked towards the archway and re-joined the group in the refectory.

A lean little man with shrewd eyes grasped his arm. He held up three papers. "What do you say to that, lad?" he cried. "Five hundred acres of arable land for twenty pounds."

Several envious eyes fell on the papers. "God damn you, Tipland! how did you get them?" said a hawk-eyed captain with a large stomach. He was a Coote's man, and not

so afraid of an oath as Cromwell's soldiers were.

"Through my trade," laughed the little man. "I had cured three fellows of Stubber's Foot of shrewd wounds. I spoke a while of England to them, and made them homesick, and they thanked me for buying their grants."

The men's eyes still rested longingly on the papers. Ottley moved away.

"Major, major," continued the little surgeon, "what is the maid like that hath to answer Sir Charles to-day for not transplanting?" His eyes twinkled, for he was a man who loved a joke and good drink, but he had got into the wrong army.

Ottley's face was inscrutable. He stood, looking handsome and well-bred, apart from the surgeon. The other officers glanced at him, but without suspicion. It did not enter their minds that he could admire the girl. To do that they knew would bring him perilously near his ruin. The only interest they felt in the case was the point that she was destitute, and thus liable to be sent as a vagrant to New England or Barbadoes. Those of a graver mind looked upon this as a judgment of God, for her father had been a noted leader of the Irish forces.

"Fair is she, or dark?" went on the lean Tipland. "Cornet Salt, whom I questioned, hath the eye of an owl when it blinks in the day."

"Sir," said one of the officers, gravely, "it matters not whether she is fair or ill-favored. Whatever her body may be, doubt not her mind is given over to idolatry and the devil."

"These Irishwomen are as forbidden to us as were the daughters of the Canaanites to the Chosen People," observed a young man, playing with the hilt of his straight cut-and-thrust sword.

"It is a pity they are so fair," said Tipland. "As Captain Williamson found to his ruin at Clonmel."

"Captain Williamson gave place to the devil," answered the first officer, sternly. "He was found guilty of a damnable intrigue by worthy Colonel Solomon Richards and a board of officers, and so finished his career. Truly, we walk in slippery places. Let this man's end be a warning to us."

"I need no such warning," returned the young officer. "My mind runs not on Irish Popish women."

"And you, Major Ottley?" grinned little Tipland. "Your words have a carnal savor, sir," came in stern rebuke from the serious

man. Ottley's eyes rested for a moment with a cold, repellent air on the surgeon's face. The grin faded away. "But they are human," the little doctor muttered, under his breath.

Just then a small, deep-sunk door at the upper end of the room opened with a harsh noise on its hinges, and two men came out. All the officers who had been sitting rose to their feet; the expounder closed his Bible, and every man's hand was raised in salute. The foremost of the new-comers returned the salute, and, striding down the room with the clanking accompaniment of steel, seated himself at the head of the table. His companion took the chair on his right, and Major Ormsby, who had re-entered the refectory, placed himself on the left.

At that moment an orderly approached Ottley and told him that one without wished to speak to him. He followed the man into the hall, which was now full of officers and settlers, and saw the Adventurer talking with much heat to an officer, who was listening with the air of a man who is separating the sense from the folly in the words he hears.

On seeing Ottley, the Adventurer broke off in his harangue and darted up to him. "Ha, my brave friend!" he cried, seizing his hand.

"Is the Lord President seated? I burn to lay my case before him. You can testify that I am forced to barn my cattle, and that I and my wife live in daily peril from the skenes of these ferocious Tories. For aught I know, my beeves have been raided since I came hither."

Ottley pointed with official calmness to the archway. "Stand there," he said; "you will presently be called."

The man hurried forward, breaking into agitated, disjointed sentences.

The officer to whom he had been speaking turned to Ottley. He had a young, pleasant face. "I made your suggestion to Colonel Hewson," he said, slightly lowering his voice. "I did not say it came from you. I spoke of the plan as if casually at supper last night. He would not listen to it."

Ottley returned the aide-de-camp's gaze with perfectly controlled eyes. "It would be a fair way out of the difficulty," he remarked.

"Possibly. But the colonel thought not. He sat very straight in his chair and looked me through with a piercing glance. 'Young man,' he said, 'if I had a daughter I would sooner she were dead than sent to the hell of Charles Stuart's court. Mere Irish and Papist

as this maid is, I will not have it on my soul that my word made her a prince's leman.' "

"It was to her brother, not to the court, I wished her to be sent," replied Ottley. "But no doubt the Commandant knows what is right."

Some officers came up as he spoke, and the conversation dropped. Suddenly the men who were facing the street paused in their talk, and a stir ran through the group.

A shower of rain was falling, and the wind drove it in oblique, liquid lines past the open door. By the sentinel, out of the shower, a girl was coming. The men's eyes fastened upon her. As she crossed the threshold a scarlet color rushed to her face, but there were dignity and courage in her air. The heavy figure of the tavern-keeper followed her a yard in the rear. Midway in the hall Margery paused, her heart fluttering like a bird just caged. Not a man among those who gazed at her spoke or stirred. The silence lasted a few moments; then a metallic sound broke the pause as Ottley left the group and went towards the girl.

He saw the quick look of alarm that sprang to her eyes, which told him that even in that hour of her helplessness and humiliation he

was not—could never be—her friend. Moreover, he was aware that his figure and hers were the points towards which a dozen eyes were drawn, and he drew up suddenly a yard from where she stood.

“Your case will be judged immediately, Lady Margery,” he said, his hand raised in salute. “May I ask you to follow me?”

His manner was official, his voice even. Without raising her eyes she obeyed and went up the hall. The shame and bitterness of the moment flooded and drowned every other thought. The degradation of having to stand before a military tribunal was an intolerable outrage. What right had these men to cut out a path for her, to order her life? In the passionate protest of her soul against their claim to the disposal of her body, she dimly knew that, lower than this depth, lay a still deeper abyss. Her eyes looked out on a horizon where impenetrable clouds rolled down to meet her youth. She had the fatal, accursed Celtic blood running, unmixed, in her veins; and these men were here to root out and destroy her race.

Ottley paused by the archway and looked back. Then he turned to the officer on duty and gave Margery into his charge. He was a

Coote's man, and had done bloody work in Wicklow under the old Sir Charles.

"Follow me, you women!" he said, harshly, and clanked and jingled into the refectory.

The order reached Margery's ears without giving her any added sense of insult. No coarseness or brutality could make the moment more terrible. She looked up the room to where the Lord President sat in buff coat and steel corselet, his cropped head covered with a wide hat with a single feather. His stern, forbidding face turned upon her, she thought. In reality, his attention was given to the Adventurer, who was telling a story of murder and raids. The Coote's man stopped and held up his hand, without glancing back, as a sign that she and Jennet were to pause. The sudden cessation of jingling steel behind them told her that Ottley had halted, too.

Sir Charles's eyes glowed like coals as the Adventurer went on. Once or twice he turned and glared at his officers, while the veins swelled on his forehead.

"This is truly a most monstrous business!" he exclaimed as the man paused, more from lack of breath than of matter. "I am told that Major Ottley hath seen and marked the nest of these pestilent Irish knaves."

The words reached Margery's ears with terrible distinctness. The scene on the hillside flashed before her again, and she clenched her right hand as it hung by her side. A question passed through Ottley's mind as he saw the action. Had she given one thought to his life as well as to those of the priest and the outlaws when she had held up her lips from the ring of gorse? The next second he was called forward.

He told his story briefly and with point, while the girl listened through a tumult of emotions. Fifty men had been present at the mass held in the open country, men armed and with all the appearance of outlaws. The priest was a tall man with a commanding presence, dressed as a shepherd. The spot lay north of the Robe, perhaps thirty English miles from the town.

"Take a troop of horse," cried Sir Charles, "and cut down and hang the gang!"

The Adventurer sprang forward. "I pray you, my Lord President," he called out, turning pale—"I pray you, let the thing be done with thoroughness. These Tories have gathered to the number of hundreds in the woods. A troop of horse is but a small force for the onfall."

"Tut, tut, man! you have a white liver," re-

turned Sir Charles, harshly. "The Ironsides make quick work of these salvage Irish. Major Ottley, lead your men out by sundown and give quarter to none, neither to woman nor child. Bring me the priest, if you take him, so that I make a swift example of him before the people."

The Adventurer's lips opened, but a frown silenced him.

"Master Lucas, I have no time to spend further on your affairs," was the sharp rebuke. "The loss of your beeves and the killing of your servants is a matter that the Commissioners may digest. For myself, I have the order of this ill province to maintain. Captain Bradock, bring up the woman who is charged with not transplanting."

IV

SHE walked up the room at the captain's harsh command, and stood silently before the battery of eyes turned upon her. Nearly every man there harbored a devil of land-greed in his heart ; but to each, as he gazed, she appeared the fair embodiment of evil, a danger and temptation to be rigorously withstood. Here and there among that group a man played with his soul, let what was human look from his eyes. To the grave-faced colonel sitting on Sir Charles's right, and one or two younger hearts, it suddenly seemed that the girl had a claim to pity.

As a support from her own sex, among so many men, she had the sturdy Jennet, who stood behind her, courtesying low. But Margery for the moment felt sexless. All the deeps in her soul had been stirred. Past, future, and present became as one. Events were rushing down to crush her, but she was indifferent to her fate. Her spirit felt sinking with the wreck of all things. It was the

anguished, passing mood of the Celt, who touches so often, by the curse and blessing of his race, the depths and the heights of life.

She heard Ottley asked for his statement, and was aware that he placed himself a few feet from her side, without either resenting or caring for the fact. Sir Charles held the Transplanter's Certificate in his hand, but his eyes dwelt on the major's face. On the left she noted that a dark, middle-aged man drummed with the fingers of his left hand on the table. Then, with a leap, the full meaning of her position sprang upon her like a wolf at her throat. Large tears of shame and anger rushed to her eyes.

"And this soldier—this fellow Boggas—where is he?" demanded Sir Charles.

The dark officer stopped drumming, and looked up. "He had got his discharge, Sir Charles, and hath been gone this week to take up his grant in the county of Meath," he said. "If I may now speak to what I know, Major Ottley hath prejudiced this man without hearing his case."

"Yet clearly he stole this lady," put in the colonel, abruptly. "The certificate bears evidence to that."

"The trade is allowed," said Sir Charles, grimly.

Every one present knew that this was true. It was necessary for the cleansing of the land that the native Irish should be transplanted into the wilds of Connaught or sold as slaves. Colonel Stubbers, governor of Galway, had shipped a thousand abroad. The Commissioners themselves had contracted with Bristol merchants for both men and women. The Lord Protector ordered and encouraged the trade.

"But here," continued the colonel, "we have a lady, in no way a vagrant, the daughter of an earl, who, while on her way to her grandfather's grant in Erris, hath been kidnapped by this man."

Sir Charles turned his lowering face on the girl. The elder Coote had allowed his soldiers to toss Irish babies on their bayonets for sport, and the old man's savagery had come out in the son.

"I care not, neither have I ever cared, for these Irish salvage lords!" he cried. "That this woman should be the daughter of a Papist rebel who joined the Kilkenny Confederation and was a lieutenant of Owen Roe O'Neil, and is now the sister of an outlaw, doth not,

to my mind, improve her case. Major Ottley's evidence goes no further than that he took her from the said Boggas at a wicker bridge some miles beyond the Mayo border. Major Ormsby hath more knowledge of this matter, and I command that he lay it before us."

The dark man rose to his feet with ill-suppressed eagerness. His voice was harsh, but cool, as he spoke. The man Boggas had been known to him since '49. He was a brave and God-fearing soldier, whose sword had not been sheathed till long past the setting of the sun at Tredagh and Wexford. At Clonmel he had been foremost in the first onslaught, and failed not afterwards. So much for his character. As to the charge that he had kidnapped the woman, that was a manifest lie. He had found her beyond the Shannon, whither she had fled while on her way to Erris. The Lord President and the officers now gathered to the hearing of this case knew that, had he chosen, he might have killed her, death being the penalty for not transplanting. Instead of resorting to so extreme a rigor, he had shown her mercy. He had brought her with him in order that she might answer for her fault to the Loughrea Commissioners. Major Ottley

had chanced upon him when he was upon his way to the town.

Here the colonel interrupted. "How had he gone so out of his road as to be found beyond the Mayo border?"

"The fear of the Tories led him north instead of south," answered the dark-faced officer.

"Major Ottley hath stated that he had a companion. Is aught known of this man?"

There was a pause for a moment, but no one had heard or knew anything of the latter. The description Ottley gave of his appearance showed that he was probably one of the English Adventurers. The colonel leaned forward and whispered to Sir Charles.

After listening to him with sour attention for a few moments, the Lord President raised his head and looked at Margery. His piercing gaze searched her face.

"Attend to me," he said, coldly. "Your word hath little weight; nevertheless, that none shall say that I have failed in justice in this inquiry, I will question you. Is it true, Lady Margery, that you recrossed the Shannon, knowing well that by so doing you forfeited your life?"

The law of life forfeiture did not come into effect till the 1st of May. It was now April,

but to the Lord President a few days' difference in point of time was of no importance.

The girl held herself erect, but her eyes were lowered. She had recovered command over her fears; her pride became a strength to her. "No, Sir Charles," she said, without a quaver; and the sudden notes of her young treble voice gave Ottley an unlooked-for sensation. It was as if a beam of sunlight had cut the gloom of the refectory and a bar of music had been played. The next instant he was afraid of his own sensation.

"Your idolatrous religion allows you to lie, whereby I cannot heed your denial," returned Sir Charles, with a sudden access of sternness. "Nevertheless, I will further put a question to you. Where and how did this man Boggas find you?"

Margery raised her eyes; every man's gaze but Ottley's dwelt upon her. He looked steadily through the nearest window, where the rain swept by the unglazed bars, falling in great drops on the wall and floor of the deep embrasure. "I was with the Transplanted," she began, and the dignity and appeal that shone in her eyes rang in her tone—"I was with them, and I fainted; and after a time, when I had recovered, two men came upon me, and, gag-

ging my mouth, took me with them. Then"—her voice was curiously steady—"then that officer there found me." Her hand pointed towards Ottley, but her eyes dwelt on the Lord President's face.

The ring of truth in her tone—or perhaps the beauty of her hair and eyes—began to convince and soften some hearts present. Yet no man knew of any mercy that could be shown her, unless it were the right to starve in the wilds of Erris. Sir Charles, however, kept in mind the petition sent to the Commissioners by the officers of the English army in Ireland—a petition that the native Irish be dealt with summarily, else if mercy be shown them, *would not the Lord be angry with us, having said, "The land ye go to possess is an unclean land, because of the people that dwell therein. Nay, ye shall surely root them out before you."*

He broke the pause that followed her words. "I must ingenuously acknowledge that this lady lies well," he said, with stern gravity. "I am not of a mind, Colonel Hewson, to place her word before that of a proved soldier, for whose honesty Major Ormsby stands surety."

But as he spoke a stir was heard without in the hall, and Captain Bradock was seen to

parley through the archway with an officer. Then he strode up the room and reported that Cornet Hold-Fast-the-Lord Salt asked permission to make a statement.

"Bring him in," said Sir Charles. "Cornet Salt is a man who reddened his sword at Naseby."

A gaunt, grizzly-haired soldier, with a purple scar on his brown, leather-like face, came into the refectory, and clanked up the flagged floor.

"What have you to report, Cornet Salt?"

"Truly, Sir Charles, the testimony of what I saw, the matter of which I would state. Ten days ago I, with a party of Horse, saw to the removal of the Transplanted. This woman hath not lied—though doubtless lies be familiar to her soul as to all these bloody-minded Irish savages. I, with my men, came upon her where she had fallen down in the rear of the Transplanted, and, thinking her dead, we left her to the wolves."

Sir Charles looked grimly down the board. The dark officer leaned his uninjured hand heavily on the table, and stared across the room.

"How do you look at this matter, Colonel Hewson?"

The answer was prompt and emphatic.

"My opinion, Sir Charles, hath not wavered since I learned that this fellow Boggas, who, setting out from Athlone for Loughrea, was found by Major Ottley in the county of Mayo. Cornet Salt's report gives but proof to my conviction."

"Major Ormsby," said Sir Charles, brusquely, "you have been deceived by this fellow."

Major Ormsby made no reply; his dilated nostrils widened still farther.

"This business may then be disposed of briefly," went on Sir Charles. "The charge of not transplanting being unproven, there only remains to declare what settlement shall be made for this woman who is the daughter of a rebel, of native Irish blood, and the sister of an outlaw. Therefore, for the good government of this country of Ireland, I accordingly command that, till such time as the Commissioners may terminate, the Lady Margery Maguire be given into the keeping of a sober and godly Englishwoman known to Major Ormsby, who hath residence some miles hence on her son's grant of land. Whereby you, Jennet Coman, now in charge of Lady Margery, shall lead her hence, and duly deliver her into the keeping of Mistress Hunnings; and let Mistress Hunnings take her forthwith to her son's grant, and

hold her in ward till the Commissioners shall demand her person. Captain Bradock, show the women forth."

The Coote's man stepped forward. "Come!" he said, rudely, and sharply tapped the courtesying Jennet on the shoulder. His big gauntleted hand swung round towards Margery, who shrank back. Ottley raised a warding arm, and a deep-toned voice called from the table:

"More gently, sirrah! You are dealing with a lady of quality!"

Jennet caught her sleeve and drew her away, whispering, as they went down the room, that the worst was over. Ottley's eyes followed their retreating figures till they left the refectory; then as he glanced across the table he met the fixed, sinister gaze of the dark officer.

The rain was no longer falling when Jennet and the girl reached the street. Here and there the black, sullen clouds had parted, showing the gray-blue sky behind. The water ran in channels through the muddy streets, and the slush rose to the ankles. Near the tavern a spectre of a form stole from the ruins of a house and sighed out a blessing in Gaelic. The girl's heart stirred at the words. She experienced a sudden sense of relief, of comfort;

the sound of the familiar language, the knowledge that her race remembered her, renewed her courage and gave her hope.

When she reached the tavern, three manservants were holding five horses before the door. Mistress Hunnings stood on the threshold, a brown cloak over her shoulders, a steeple-shaped hat on her cap. Her complete preparation for a journey startled Margery. "You have heard," she said, haughtily.

"A bird flew hither to me," was the answer. "Get your things together, mistress, and come."

"Hoity, toity!" cried Jennet. "Are the wild Irish breaking into town, that you run away in this fashion? I vow Lady Margery shall break her fast first before she is off and away with you, Singing Woman."

"The road is long and the night will be dark," answered Mistress Hunnings. "Let her feed fast, then."

"By your leave, make room for us to pass," said Jennet, "and we'll try to pleasure you."

They entered the kitchen, and, while Margery ate, Jennet tied the few things the girl possessed—and which Ottley's money had bought—into a bundle. In the interval the Singing Woman's voice came harshly from the door. "Fools! Fools!" she cried to her ser-

vants, "draw the girths tighter or I'll clout your cobbles!"

The girl finished her meal and went out; on the threshold she gave her hand to Jennet.

"Good-bye," she said, bravely. "When my brother, the Earl of Fermanagh, comes back with the King, then I shall reward you as his sister should."

The Singing Woman turned slowly, and stared without speech at her for a moment. "The King with his harlots will not be back for a many days," she said, presently. "Your beauty will have faded by then, mistress."

Jennet flung up her hands. "Now God defend us!" she cried, "from the Young Man and his women. Noll hath too firm a hold."

"Till the nation cry out for the joy of sin—till then—not longer," said the Singing Woman. "Get up, get up, mistress; the way leads far, and the Tories are abroad."

She beckoned to one of the men, who helped Margery into the saddle. As the party rode down the street the girl looked westward with steady, brave eyes. She was confident that she would find friends in the mountains who would help her to escape. The sentence had been given and the uncertainty of the past

days was over. She felt as if the door of hope was widening fast.

Four hours later Ottley rode out of the town. One hundred swords followed him, every man carrying *The Souldier's Pocket Bible* buttoned under his coat ; every mind was filled with grim thoughts of slaughter, every trooper believed that he was about to do the work of God.

The men went up the road or track leading northwest at the trot till they saw the Clare winding before them through the plain. A mile beyond the river they halted to examine their saddlery and draw girths. The sky was black, but one yellow arm of light lay low towards the horizon. As Ottley raised his saddle-flap, something white, like a large moth, fluttered to the ground. He picked it up and looked at it in the fading gleam. A jagged bit of linen with five words traced upon it lay in his hand. For a moment he stared at the lettering before he turned swiftly to his men. "Who saddled my charger? You, Lane?" he called out.

The man, his servant, stepped forward. "In truth, sir, I put strap in buckle with a careful eye for our onset," he answered.

"What others were in the stable?"

"I was alone, sir."

"Did you see any one about?"

"One of the native Irish ventured within. I kicked him forth, striking him low with a broom."

The three officers, the captain, lieutenant, and Cornet Salt, came up as the trooper spoke. Behind them trotted Surgeon Tipland, bawling out to know if any man had met with a mischance.

"What hath happened?" asked the captain.

"A strap ill placed," answered Ottley; and gave the order "Prepare to mount."

The men fell back to their horses, and a moment later, at the word of command, sprang into their saddles. While the light lasted they rode at a smart trot along the track, their leader's face hard and set. As the darkness closed in round them the whole body of riders swerved from the road, and, striking into wild, untraversed land, headed for the north. Ottley's plan was to push the horses hard all night and surprise the outlaws at daybreak. To swoop down upon them before any famished peasant or scout discovered his men and warned the Tories, it was necessary to ride round their lair and strike them from the rear.

One of the troopers who knew the country guided the party. But his knowledge became practically useless as the night grew ominously black. Once or twice the advance-guard floundered into a bog, and struggled out with difficulty. At other times the horses stumbled up rocky hills or groped their way through sandy, broken hollows. Not a star shone, and the clouds covered the moon like a wall. Objects only became visible within a yard of the horses' noses; and round the whole circle of the night the black floor of earth met, without a break, the thick-clouded roof of the sky.

The men dared not strike a light, and halts had frequently to be called. It was impossible to go beyond a walk, and the heavy showers of rain drenched the soldiers. When dawn came the troop found itself wandering in a tract of marshy land at the foot of a hill. Halting here, Ottley sent a reconnoitring party up the slope. Ten minutes later a trooper came galloping back to report that a house lay about a mile distant on the other side.

Leaving the men in charge of the lieutenant, he rode forward with the captain and went up the hill. A glance round the country showed him that, in the troop's wanderings and doublings during the night, it had got north-

west of the Adventurer's house. The woods in which the Tories lay were due west from that point. The darkness of the past hours had made the night attack an impossibility, and the plan was spoiled.

Bringing up the men, he led the troop over the crest of the hill and down into the plain. A river here cut the marshy land in two, and, swimming their horses across, the soldiers clattered up to the house just as the gray light cleared into white. Two servants, who were driving a few cows into a high-walled field, left their work, and, followed by a string of barking dogs, came forward to gape. In an instant each was collared by a trooper.

"Surround the house," ordered Ottley. "Let no one out."

As he rode up to the door the Adventurer's wife, who had just jumped out of bed at the noise, came to the entrance. "Are the Tories on us?" she gasped.

Ottley raised his cap. The woman retreated, suddenly remembering that she had not much more than the quilt upon her back. Then she thought of her husband and cried out for news.

"He is well," said Ottley. "Have you any native Irish among your servants?"

"Only two or three, sir. The Commissioners gave leave that we should have them, my husband pleading that he lacked hands to till and sow."

"Then, madam, I must place a guard in your house for to-day," said Ottley, "and allow no one to leave it."

"Ah, sir, I shall not quarrel with you," answered the woman, "for I well guess your errand, and that my worthy man's word in the Lord President's ear hath sent you hither."

She disappeared into the house, and Ottley returned to his men. Placing a guard in the house, he drew off the rest of the troop to a coppice of beech and hazel, where the soldiers dismounted and picketed their horses. Sending out a few scouts, he posted sentries by the outer ring of trees, and then set himself to wait till night should again fall.

Each man had brought two days' provision with him. When all had eaten their biscuits and salt beef, some lit their pipes or went to sleep, others drew out their *Souldier's Bible*—a small octavo of sixteen pages, the passages, with the exception of five, being taken from the Old Testament—and listened with stern, interested faces while a sergeant expounded to them.

The officers walked round the edge of the wood, Ottley with brooding eyes. The captain's yawns and the chirpy voice of the surgeon broke in on the silence.

"Naseby!" cried Tipland, at a muttering from the Cornet. "Why, man, I have cut off a good hundred legs or more since that fight. Did I not piece you together after Limerick! Now I think of it, it be an odd thing how a man's soul is loath to get out of his body. And a battle or siege makes a many doors."

"And one day the door stands open and will shut no more," muttered the old soldier. "Then a man ups and followeth Him on the White Horse."

"I would," remarked the captain, "that the attack had been made. Some kerne may come upon our scouts and warn these Tories before we can ride down on them to-night."

"Yes, curse the mischance!" said Ottley. Then, in a cooler tone, he added. "Nevertheless, last night was too dark to know friend from foe."

The faint wind brought the sound of crunching as the horses ate round their ropes. One pale streak of sunlight broke through the trees, brightening a silvery web spun on a hazel bush near. All through the wood the raindrops

dripped from twig and branch, and drenched primroses and wild violets drooped with wet faces in the morning light. Suddenly a dozen voices broke into a psalm.

Ottley left his companions and swung down on the group. "Silence! no one is to sing," he said.

The sergeant rose, the open Bible in his hand. "Would you quench the spirit of the Lord?" he asked, sternly; "and that too at an hour when we are gathering to battle to destroy the Midianites, sparing neither man, nor woman, nor child?"

"Yes, sergeant; and your life also if a voice is raised again. I forbid the men to sing." Ottley's keen glance ran down the group.

"The young man is right," remarked a soldier as he turned away. "I have seen Noll hold a pistol to a captain's head who would not cease from expounding at the moment of battle. We shall shout praises to the Lord—yea, that lustily—as our swords hew down the Tories."

The officers had moved on, but the surgeon's voice came down the humid air to Ottley's ears as he crossed the ground. "What! have you not heard it? In truth, Cornet Salt, it's like to make a stir. Good, honest men of English

birth are running off to the Commissioners, each with a complaint. The man-catchers have been growing over-bold, and have kidnapped wives of the disbanded soldiery and settlers. 'Tis a damnable theft, and like to make a noise."

Ottley stood still; he had paused at a point where the trees broke. The raindrops fell in a shower over his gloved hand as he drew back a branch. A gray sky with jagged islands of blue arched the undulating land. Dark-brown clouds swung above the tops of the hills; softened shadows swam in the hollows. The gorse lay like a yellow mist in a purple-brown field that spread midway on the nearest slope. Farther west were bogs, deep woodlands, and bare, stony uplands through which the limestone burst in patches. It was there the outlaws kept their camp, and it was there that they were to be stamped out and killed like mad dogs. Ottley's eyes rested on the point. But even as he tried to concentrate his thoughts upon the coming attack, deep in his heart the message seemed to him like a cry from the girl.

V

WHEN Margery's horse crossed the Clare, and the washed hoofs of the animal sank again in the muddy track, the dominant thought in her mind was that she had parted with Ottley forever. This belief gave her entire satisfaction. He was connected with a moment in her life which she wished to forget. As she rode on her spirits rose, and her immediate future filled her with no anxiety. Once or twice a thought of the outlaws flashed across her, but even their case seemed less desperate viewed in her new glow of hope.

Not only wolves, but peasants, sheltered among the mountains, and some brave heart, she believed, would learn her need and help her to escape. There was no danger, though indignity, in her present position; and as her fears lessened and her hopes increased she could all but see the French king's ship waiting for her boat in the offing.

In this high tide of her belief her imagination stirred and played bright tricks, till in

fancy she followed the fading daylight, and, holding its yellow robes, dipped behind the sea. Then, when the twilight fell and the darkness deepened, she thought she saw through the door of night where the rose and blue of the coming day awaited the signal of the morning star.

"God keep me from meeting Cromwell's Ironsides again," she said, and her hand stole upward as she made the sign of the cross.

Neither the blackness around her nor the showers of rain lessened this elated mood. She paid no attention to the mutterings of the men or to the gruff ejaculations of the Singing Woman, till suddenly a voice cried out in alarm, when the horses were stopped, and, amidst the rattle of bridle-reins and the startled tones of the servants, she sprang back from her dreams to the hard facts around her.

"A plague on the night! We have lost our way! We shall have the Tories on us!" the three men called out.

"Strike a light!" cried the Singing Woman, shrilly, without fear in her tone.

Margery's horse moved; a lean hand was thrust out and caught her in the dark.

"If you stir, girl, I'll drive a knife between your ribs," the woman said.

Their mistress's coolness stopped the clamor of the men. They were fair-sized fellows, with the hearts of hares, and half mad with fear of the Tories.

A spark was struck from a flint, and presently a light was set in a horn lantern.

"Now, two of you knaves go on and find the road," said the Singing Woman. "You, Jonathan, ride behind the girl and myself."

The party plodded on, the horses sinking to the hocks in the pools of water. The lantern shed fitful yellow gleams on uncertain-shaped dark masses that, for all one could tell, might be bushes or rocks. The men in front spoke now and then together in low tones, while the rear-guard kept his horse close to the flanks of the animals ridden by the women. All eyes tried to pierce the darkness, the servants' ears on the alert for any sound that might send their hearts again into their mouths.

After they had gone on for an hour like this, they found themselves on the crest of a ridge. The man with the lantern turned it on the slope. "It be as black as a wolf's mouth below, mistress," he called aloud. "I'm a-thinking it would be better for our necks to spend the night under the rocks to the rear."

"Out! you runagate!" answered the Singing

Woman, in her lance-like tone. "'Tis but the bog beneath us. We'll be near the river now. Down with you, or my son shall flog you!"

The men moved forward, their black figures and their horses' quarters shot with shafts of light.

"Follow!" said the old woman to Margery, and she drove the girl's horse down the hill. At the bottom the lamp-gleam revealed a deep-sunk pool of inky water and the black bank that rose above it. "Man or maid would take a long sleep there, Mistress Yellow Hair," she said, coolly. "And it hath a many a fellow as deep."

"Do you think I am afraid of a bog, English-woman?" answered Margery; but the black, slimy water gave her a creep as she gazed.

The lantern-bearer dismounted, and with cautious steps guided the party over the yielding ground. After a time the soft surface gave way to firmer land, and the servant climbed into the saddle. About a quarter of a mile farther on they heard the booming and roar of a river in flood. The noise came across the night with a tumult of sound like the shouts of a multitude.

When they reached the bank the man held the lantern over the racing current. Both

servants looked back at their mistress. "Into it!" she cried; and with white faces they obeyed. "Come, girl," she went on, clutching Margery's rein, "we are all but home."

The horses swerved and refused the water, but some sharp strokes from the servant in the rear drove them into the flood. Margery saw her garran's shoulders sink beneath her, and the next second her face and dress were spattered with spray. The splashing of the animals in front, and the men's voices as they called out to show where the ford lay, reached her ears through the roar of the flood. The lantern lit up the liquid path, and shot rays beyond it on the black, swirling river racing to its goal. In a short time the force of the current swept the horses from the shallows, and they were soon swimming down the stream. They found ground again by an island that stood a few yards from the opposite shore, and here the party halted for a moment. Mistress Hunnings broke into song as they waited, her shrill voice ringing treble against the bass of the flood:

*"Ho, ho! for the river,
Ho, ho! for my song.
The man-catcher's quiver
Is full and is strong."*

The witch-like tones rose and sank, then the river caught the last, lingering note, bore it a yard into the night, and drowned it in its roar. Suddenly Margery saw a yellow star in the heart of the darkness; the men pointed to it, and the next moment the Singing Woman drove them all into the water. The river ran with less force between the bank and the island, and the horses found and kept their footing.

In a few minutes they reached the bank, and then it seemed to Margery that the darkness was dissolving, and an influence widening the night. Objects began to loom out, and in an instant she saw where the sky and the earth met.

"Morning is coming," said one of the men.
"'Tis well we are home."

"The Robe will have let down its flood in two hours," answered his companion, and Margery started, a sudden chill seizing her.

They rode towards the light, and in the creeping dawn she could make out a two-storied house with flankers and a bawn of stone. To the left, a few yards off, she saw the ruins of a castle. The men dismounted and led the horses through a gate into the yard, where they helped the women to alight. Their mistress

gave them a few sharp orders, and they took the animals to the rear.

The Singing Woman caught Margery's arm. "Come in," she said, roughly. "I've found and made your song."

The girl shook herself free, though she remembered the threat of the knife, and walked into the house. Mistress Hunnings gave her a bright, keen glance as she followed.

A door stood open on the right of the narrow hall, and she told Margery to go into the room. The girl obeyed, and saw a man sitting on a stool before a turf fire, with his back turned towards her. An oil-lamp shed its light from the high shelf above his head, and a large spinning-wheel stood in a corner. He did not look round or stir.

The Singing Woman gave him a sidelong glance as she went to a black oak cupboard and took out a dish with a roasted hare, a bannock of oaten meal, a black bottle, and two knives. These things she put on the table, and told Margery to sit down and eat.

The sight of the woman's unwashed fingers and strong yellow teeth, as she cut off a piece of the hare, took away the girl's appetite. She broke a piece of the bannock, her eyes drawn

every now and then towards the man's back. Suddenly he rose.

"I'll to bed," he said, abruptly, and faced the women. Margery's hand fell as she was about to raise the cake to her lips. The face she saw was that of the man who had helped Boggas to kidnap her.

"What ails you, wench?" asked the Singing Woman. A sickening fear had seized the girl. She tried to control herself, and went on eating.

The man lingered by the door. As he met her gaze his stolid face lightened into a leer.

"What do you wait for?" demanded Mistress Hunnings, sharply.

"To turn the handle, mother." His goat-like eyes twinkled.

"You have sat up late, my son. How be the fairies in the fort?"

"Drinking the dew, mother, and training their horses."

"Show them the black-hafted knife. Their boat sails soon."

The man opened the door; he gave Margery another grin and went out. His mother took a deep draught from the bottle, and rose from the table.

"Now, girl, to bed!" she cried, in her short,

gimlet-like tone. Margery got up and followed her from the room, her heart beating with fear. They went up a stone stair to a door at the top of the landing. The Singing Woman threw it open, and led the way into a room with two beds. Turning the lock, she took off her hat and cloak, and without undressing flung herself down on the mattress near the door. Margery stood looking about her in the growing light for a few moments before she lay down on the second bed. She determined to keep awake, but her aching eyes soon grew weary of gazing at the curtain-like shadows, and in twenty minutes she had fallen asleep.

When she awoke the sunlight fell in slanting rays through the window. She could hear the river still racing in tumult over its bed, and the lowing of a cow searching for its calf. A glance round the room showed her that she was alone; the woman had gone.

With the certainty that some evil was intended, she sprang up and ran to the door. It was locked, and the window was also secured. The latter faced the castle, which was built high and narrow. Its walls had been slighted and blackened by gunpowder; and through a lancet-shaped slit in a portion of

the building still standing she was sure that she saw a head.

The vivid green lawn just showed beyond the bawn and the blue swirl of the river. The shadows were thrown backward, and even as she stood at the window the sunlight died out of the room. A cheerless gloom filled the place. She had slept through a whole day.

As she looked from the ruin to the lawn a babel of voices broke on her ear. The sound came from the room below, and almost without knowing what she did she dropped on her knees. The house had been newly built, and the boards ill-fitted. Through a hole in the wood she was able to get a peep of the scene in the lower room. She could see the hearth, and the red centre of the black, smouldering sods seemed to look up at her like a fiery, watching eye. A bit of the Singing Woman's petticoat was visible; and by shifting a little she saw Hunnings leaning by the door; then her hair stood on end as her eyes fell on Boggas. He, with two strangers, sat on a bench by the fire; a couple of wolf-hounds lay dozing on the hearth at their feet.

"Fear!" cried Mistress Hunnings—"who fears? I have seen life and had my pleasures these sixty years. Hath not time spared my

teeth and my strength? Shall I hold back like a child? No! not if the Horned One stood before me."

"Hold a bit, woman, hold a bit," said one of the strangers on the bench. "We can finger our gold before one squeak of the Three reaches the Commissioners' ears. But I advise that we risk it not again. What say you, sergeant?"

Boggas leaned forward and spat on the floor before he spoke. His keen, self-seeking eyes as he looked up made the girl's blood run cold. "I have risked my soul for less twenty times these ten years," he said, coolly. "I have weighed this matter; there is less risk in it than you think."

"Yes, damn the risk," growled the woman's son.

"Let that oath pass," answered Boggas. "'Tis not a fortnight, lad, since you had fears on this matter, which is not one wherein to summon the devil. We will send them down the Lough to-night. The *Joseph of Thornbury* will be due if the winds keep her not back. Where is the girl?"

The Singing Woman pointed upward with her thumb. "Overhead," she said, shortly.

"There is the lower lake," put in one of the

men on the bench. "It will be a long trip. Why not cross the country?"

"Verily you are no general. If there be pursuit, what better place than the islands to hide in?"

"But the ship will be searched, man, the ship will be searched if the outcry gets to the Commissioners."

Boggas laughed. "Truly the Three are as gallows to your heart. That troubles me not. The *Joseph of Thornbury* will have sailed before the Commissioners stir a finger in the matter. But there is the likelihood of pursuit, and that after the girl."

"Hath Major Ormsby—" called out the woman's son, but Boggas interrupted him.

"We are quit of the major. He hath so far stood my friend, seeing that I aided him in buying the soldiers' grants, that he spoke a word in Sir Charles's ear, and thus the maid was given into our hands. But he did this not fully guessing our purpose, thinking too, by chance, that you, Mother Hunnings, were what you are not—a sober, godly woman."

The old woman's eyes brightened like newly polished knives. "Quarrel not with me, man of blood," she said. "It will be well if you

remember that the noose is round your neck and the rope in my hand."

"And your own scraw is caught too," laughed Boggas. "But this is what I fear. The Lord President and other Commissioners will not trouble to know what has happened to an Irish Popish maid; the danger will be from a carnal young man, a Major Ottley. He hath put an eye on the maid."

"He dare not risk the loss of his command," observed one of the men. "A friendship with the girl would be his ruin."

"He is a carnal man," repeated Boggas, "one truly, I fear, given over to sin, even as the godless Cavaliers."

The other men sniggered, but the Singing Woman rolled a wet cloth into a ball and struck Boggas across the eyes. "Out, you canting fool!" she cried. "But that I know your worth in catching living flesh I'd cut your wizzard."

Boggas flung the cloth from him, his lips widened. "An old woman's tongue is her weapon, and not much sharper than a wet clout," he said, coolly. "You are ruffled to-night, Singing Woman."

"And with right," she answered, "seeing how you delay over this business. But never-

theless your words have some marrow in them. The girl hath a man-compelling face, and the sooner she is safe in ship the better for our money."

"We shall have to bring up the boats," said Boggas. "Hunnings, send your fellows for them."

"They are in fear of the Tories," replied the woman's son; "and with some reason, seeing the knaves killed one of their number last week."

The two men on the bench rose. "Let the cowards come with us," one of them said. "Our pistols will make short work of any damned Irish kerne."

"Have the boats up before twelve," ordered Boggas, and his eyes went towards the rafters. "It is on my mind, Singing Woman," he said, calmly, "that the maid hath been of this council. Look at the holes and chinks in the boards."

Every one looked up. Margery thrilled with fear. The blood ran to her face, and she rose to her feet, trying to think coherently. But her thoughts could cut no path of safety through the dangers that surrounded her.

"Take her to the fairies," she heard Mistress

Hunnings say. A few seconds afterwards footsteps came up the stair.

The key turned in the door, and she saw Boggas and Hunnings on the threshold.

The knowledge that she had nothing but her wits to help her restored her nerve. She looked from one to the other with eyes that did not betray her fears.

"You are to come with us, mistress," said Boggas, in a cheerful, brisk tone.

The natural, business-like ring in his voice gave her courage. He was less odious to her thus than when he assumed the nasal tones and pious phraseology of the times. Hope suddenly knocked at her heart. "Sergeant Boggas, grant me the favor of a word with you alone," she said, steadily.

He jerked his thumb backwards, and Hunnings went down the stairs. "Your will, mistress?" he asked, laconically.

"This," said the girl, in a clear, low voice. "'Tis true I have heard what your purpose towards me is. By selling me to Merchant Sellich, or whoever it is that has bought me"—her tone for an instant quavered and her eyes clouded—"you, Master Boggas, make for your share but a few pounds. If you will help me to make good my escape to Brest I will

give you my diamond necklace. This I swear before God and the Holy Mother."

His eyes fell and rested on her face as she spoke. They wore a cool, reflective expression, as if the man were looking inward. "Where is this necklace?" he demanded, after a pause.

"In my brother's keeping."

He was silent for a few moments, and she thought she had won him.

A sudden surge of hate and horror rose in her heart as he continued to gaze at her. "I promise," she repeated, slowly, "I promise before the Blessed Virgin."

In an instant his manner changed, but not the expression in his eyes. Over them he seemed never to have any control. "Away with you and your idolatry!" he cried out, with an affectation of fierceness. "It was such as you my sword hewed down at the Cross of Wexford. Away with you! Offer not your gewgaws and your vanities to a man who hath put his hand to the plough to make of this land a vineyard of the Lord."

He motioned her towards the door with an angry gesture, and she went past him shuddering. Half-way down the stair he suddenly caught her arm. "Remember," he said, his voice again natural, with a cheeriness in it that

sickened her—"remember, mistress, your diamonds are gone. Many months ago your brother sold them for the Young Man, Charles Stuart, and this news, my maid, all in this house have learned."

It was a shrewd guess, and quite true. Moreover, her brother had carried his sword to Austria and fallen in battle. And it was the hope of meeting a man who had gasped out his life in agony months before that kept her quick-witted and brave.

The Singing Woman and her companions stood grouped by the door as she came down. They looked up without speaking, and the silence chilled her. Their cruel eyes, she knew, ran her over as if she had been one of their beeves—as flesh to sell.

The men took her out of the house. The sun had set, and the river ran slate-gray between the green banks. Huge clouds lay tumbled along the western sky. A jagged cleavage, where the sun had gone down, made a door for the red-gold light to escape and touch the crest of the hills.

They led her towards the blackened castle, passing under an archway into the building. Fallen masonry and half-burned rafters lay on the flagged floor. The staircase had gone, but

part of an upper room projected over the hall. Boggas took a ladder and placed it against this platform.

"Go up," he said to Margery.

She obeyed, and half-way up heard voices overhead. Pausing on the projection, she looked back; Boggas was already on the rungs, the other men stood by the arch with uplifted faces.

"Go on," he ordered; and, keeping by the wall, she walked down the projection to a doorway. The room within was lighted by one narrow window. A number of women and girls sat or lay on the dusty floor. Three of the former sprang up with shrill cries as they saw Boggas, and ran towards him.

"Let us go!" they shrieked. "Villain, we have been stolen!"

He pushed them back. "That tale hath been told too often," he said, a cold smile on his face. "Stop your foolish prating, women. We show you a mercy in sending you to Indian Bridges and New England, where you will forget your Irish blood and idolatrous religion."

"But, man!" cried one of the women, "we three are honest, godly Englishwomen, wives of soldiers who have taken up their grants.

My husband, Simon Robins, trailed a pike in Colonel Faire's Foot. There hath been a terrible mistake! For God's sake, let us out!"

As she spoke she and the two other wives fell on their knees, wringing their hands and sobbing out about their husbands and children. Boggas stood looking at them for a few moments, then he struck each woman across the face.

"You lie," he said, calmly, and turned away. Margery heard him go down the ladder, and knew by the sounds that followed that he had removed it.

The moans and cries of the Englishwomen filled the place. Those who were of Irish birth looked at them silently with heavy, misery-laden eyes. Margery felt a sudden choking in her throat. The full meaning of that scene tore her heart.

"Listen!" she cried; "you can escape, you can be saved. Some of the masonry lies near the projection. When it is dark we can all jump on to it and get away from this house."

Every face turned towards her. As she stood with her halo of yellow hair in the dim light by the doorway she seemed to these women who had parted with hope like the

sudden presence of a spirit. They gazed at her for a moment without speaking.

"They would follow us, maid," one of the soldier's wives said. "Ah, if my man was here he'd make these pick-thanks run!"

An Irish girl whose head had been bowed on her arms looked up; her eyes gleamed like those of a lost soul. "The gates of sorrow are shut and made fast over my heart," she murmured in Gaelic, and laid her head down again.

"You have nothing to fear, you English-women!" exclaimed Margery. "The ships will be searched and you will be found. But for me and my sisters here there will be no finding or pity. Come with me! We will hide in the mountains with the peasants till we get a ship to take us to France."

The women moaned and shook their heads. Despair had clutched their hearts.

"*Mhuire as truagh! A mhuire as truagh!*" they sobbed. "The curse of Cromwell is on the land."

"Yes; but the blessing of God shall be stronger than it!" cried the girl. "When it is dark, let us escape!"

But only sobs and tears answered her. And as she moved among them and talked of the

banished fathers and husbands and brothers, and pictured homes that no iron hand could reach, the dusk fell like a brown wing across the window, and the room lost form. One of the Englishwomen had gone out and looked into the hall. She told Margery that none among them could take the leap.

When the night had closed in, the girl went herself to see. The hall was nearly as black as the room she had left. A few stars showed through the broken roof, and a faint gleam of stellar light pierced the gloomy depth at her feet. The mass of fallen masonry was invisible. The woman was right; to take that leap in the dark might mean instant death.

Kneeling down, she stared into the black gulf and tried to measure the depth, but she was not sure of the spot where the heap lay. Her heart sickened; the one chance of escape, faint as it was, seemed lost. The mass, she remembered, was somewhere on the right of where the ladder had stood, and, groping forward, her hand on the wall, she determined to risk her life and take the leap. Once on the ground, and safe, she could find the ladder and enable the women to escape.

As she moved along a figure emerged from the darkness, and stood by the arch. The

sound of a knife drawn from a sheath followed, and the starlight showed the gleam of steel.

"No, no, mistress," rose a voice. "I hold the black-hafted knife to drive back the fairies."

Fright and dismay kept her silent for a few moments. Then she remembered that the man had looked at her with admiring eyes.

"Is it Master Hunnings?"

"Why, it be Yellow Hair!" exclaimed the guard. "Go back, little mistress."

"It is dark and sad in the room, and the cries of the women weary me. Why may I not sit here?"

"Indeed, I do not know," said the man; "and to make you happier I'll sit up there with you too."

"Do, Master Hunnings."

"Oh, a willing enough, maid. All right, my beauty, I'm a-coming."

He left his position by the arch and went towards where the ladder lay. She heard him groping about in the dark, and every nerve in her body thrilled. Her decision was swift. As soon as he was half-way up she meant to hurl the ladder back. Presently a curse rose from below.

"Damnation!" growled the man. "Boggas

hath carried it away. Bide there, mistress; I'll fetch it in the twinkle of your eye."

"Wait one moment!" cried Margery. "Is it not by the fallen masonry?"

He moved forward and searched, and the girl marked the place. Calling out that it was not there, he left the castle, stumbling in his haste over the threshold.

The moment he was gone she sprang to her feet, opened wide her arms, and, with a breath like a sob, leaped from the projection. The wind rushed by her face, her body thrilled to the shock. The rubble crumbled away under her feet, and her hands grappled the loosened mortar and stones. For an instant she was on her knees; then, with bleeding palms, she scrambled off the heap and ran to the arch.

In another minute she was racing away from the castle, leaving the Robe in her rear. A horned moon and the stars shed a dim, misty light on the fields. The land rolled off in indistinct undulations to the sky-line. Thick woods lay in the hollows; but for a time her feet labored through a ploughed field which had been made heavy by the rains. Presently she got into the wilder country, where her pace slackened as she went up the rising ground.

Tussocks of coarse grass lay here and there, and clumps of gorse dotted the slope. Then, all in an instant, she knew that she was being followed; not that she saw the men, but she felt their presence; and, breathing hard, she sank on her knees behind a furze. When she dared to look down the slope she saw two figures crossing the ploughed field. The sight made her blood leap, and she crept forward. A thought of Ottley rushed to her mind. The blood sang in her ears; she gave herself up for lost. Then, as it were, a door of refuge opened before her, and she found she had crawled up the edge of an empty lime-kiln.

Swinging herself over the side, she lay palpitating like a hare at the bottom. It was so long since the place was used that it was choked with long grasses and weeds. She crept as far as she could into the narrow channel through which the lime was drawn, and pulled the grass and a broken furze the wind had blown into the kiln over her head and shoulders. After she had lain there for a time that seemed eternity she heard the men come up, and knew that they were looking in.

"Go down," she heard Boggas say.

The sound of feet scrambling against the side followed, and a hand groped round the

stones. Every instant she expected it to touch her ; the perspiration broke out over her body.

"She is not here," Hunnings's voice called out. It came from just above her head, and she knew that the man was clinging to the side. Had he come down he must have found her.

Boggas swore. "This comes of a careless watch," he growled. "I will turn out the wolf-hounds."

Hunnings got out of the kiln, and Margery heard him stamping on the brink. A loosened stone rolled down and struck her, but the furze broke the blow. Both pairs of feet then went down the hill.

VI

WHEN she knew the men were gone she climbed out, hurting her bruised hands afresh. Without looking back she ran down the other side of the ridge. Attenuated clouds floated over the zenith, showing a golden point here and there. The stars blazed like signal-fires in the northwest sky, and these, she thought, beckoned her on, for her own race hid in the mountains till their God should remember them.

Her terror of the slave-house made those in her path pale and vanish from her thoughts. Boggas and the man-catchers were more fearful than the wolves. Even starvation and death were but a gate to ultimate escape if hope was lost. So she fled over the ground, her breath coming in sobs, though she was not conscious of fatigue. A dozen times she fancied she heard the dogs racing at her heels; a dozen times she seemed to meet Boggas's pitiless eyes from behind some bush or rock.

For a while the ground was broken and

rugged, dotted with gorse and dangerous with rabbit-holes. Then she found herself crossing a floor of matted heather, which soon gave place to soft black mud, where the water oozed up under her feet. A deep pool, holding the reflection of stars in its dark surface, suddenly barred her way. She turned and reached the heather again, stumbling over the tangled, springy roots till she got on the coarse, faded grass that met it where the bog joined firmer land.

The ground here rose on her left into a hill crowned with a dark, circling hedgerow, with an outer fringe of jet-black shadow. In front it spread in a strip of level sward up the edge of a wood. She had a vague feeling that she had visited the scene before, that she had seen it at some momentous hour, that her life had touched a crisis here.

She made for the wood instinctively, driven by the wish for shelter, though she knew that she would be no safer there from the dogs than if she had remained in the open. The hazel branches caught and loosened her hair; her eyes could find no path in the dark. Pausing from exhaustion, she leaned against a tree, with hope and courage gone. Then again, as a thrill of horror seized her at the

certainly that the man-catchers were on her track, she thought of Ottley. He had saved her once; if he were near her now he would make Boggas and his fellow-ruffians fly. But even as she said this to herself her indignation awoke. What avail was his help? what use had it been? He had taken her from Boggas to give her into the power of the Lord President. That had been to fling her from one cruel hand to another. There was neither mercy nor pity to be expected from an Ironside. The tears gathered and rained from her eyes; her friendlessness and impotence staggered and chilled her.

She had stood by the tree some minutes when the sound of voices broke harshly on the night. She heard the cracking of branches and the noise of loud laughter coming from the deeper recesses of the wood. In a moment she was alert and ready for flight. Through the black shadows a head rose above the nearest mass of hazels, and a shout followed that made her turn and fly. The brushwood bent and broke in her rear, and she knew the man had seen her and was hard in pursuit.

The race was brief, and went to the swift and the strong. In another minute a hand from which a wide sleeve fell back caught and

grasped the girl. One faint struggle, then an overpowering weakness seized her, all her strength melted away. Yet she did not faint, and was conscious of hands on her shoulders and hair, and that a dozen pairs of lawless eyes were fixed upon her face.

"Get a flare! Get a flare! We have a prize here," she heard, in Gaelic.

The language rang like a sudden bar of music in her ears. She was in the hands of the Irish outlaws, but for all that she was aware she was in horrible danger. The certainty of it, and her own physical exhaustion, kept her dumb for a minute.

"Now, Art Mac Art, quick! It's not your mother we've got," called out the man who held her.

The scraping of flint followed. Two or three figures bent together; she saw the spark caught, a gleam of light flashed from a bundle of dried rushes, then the blazing mass held over her head.

Over a dozen fierce, bearded faces were turned upon her. The light danced on ragged, saffron-colored kilts, on buff coats that had been taken from English soldiers, upon a steel breastplate here and there. Eyes looked at her from under shaggy glibbes of hair, one man

alone in all the wild group wearing a bascinet. The girl trembled as she met their gaze; they seemed to her to view her like wolves.

The hand that held her tightened.

"By Mary! this maid is to my taste!" the man cried. "She is too good for a hell-doomed Sassanach lover!"

"We'll pay for her kisses with the beeves of Cromwell's fat devils that have stolen our lands," called out the soldier in the bascinet. "Aye, maid, we'll take your friend's cattle."

A man whose blue eyes looked white in the yellow glare grasped his two-handed sword with a sinister gesture. "A curse upon such kisses! A thousand-year curse!" he exclaimed. "Take the Sassanach girl back to her father's house with her nose and ears cut off."

The man with the torch laughed. "Death on you, Morrish Mac Shane!" he bawled. "Owen Roe would have strung you up on the gad for that. The Sassanach have taken our women, and we'll keep theirs. That's the truth for you, galloglach!"

The very extremity of her danger restored Margery's wits. Her captor's grasp had relaxed; with a swift movement she burst from him and ran towards and sprang upon the stump of a tree. The torch flared upon her

Puritan dress and a long strand of hair that hung over her shoulder. She turned her white face full on the outlaws.

"Soldiers of Owen Roe O'Neil, of Preston, of Ormond," she cried, with scarce a tremble in her voice. "Soldiers, may I speak to you?"

They rushed forward, but the man with the bascinet waved them back. "Let her speak," he called out, hoarsely with a laugh. "We see her well up there."

"Oh, a fair maid!" jeered Art Mac Art. "Her life shall be the life of our wives and sisters in the Tobacco Islands!"

"Our women at the Cross of Wexford!" shouted Morrish Mac Shane. "Let her neck pay for theirs!"

"Soldiers of Owen Roe—" she cried again. A storm of voices interrupted her.

"That name! Eoghan Ruadh's name! That name on your cursed Sassanach lips!" they roared. "Hie! girl, where did you learn our tongue?"

"Your tongue!" The slight figure trembled. "Your tongue! Mine! My tongue! I learned it at my foster-mother's breast. I learned it in the air, the rivers, the land; I am Margery Ny Guire. My father was the Earl of Fermanagh."

In an instant the jeers and mockery ceased. The men stared upward at her. The lawless look in each man's eyes went out like a fire suddenly extinguished. Amazement and awe filled their gaze. A silence fell upon the place in which only the deep-drawn breaths of those around her could be heard; and the torch, as it sent a last flare over the still figures of the soldiers, showed the girl's tragic face and up-raised arm. She had thrown a leash over their necks which held them fast.

Then as she stood waiting, exalted almost above fear, a roar burst from the men. Their blended voices went up in one long peal to the stars. They waved their swords and skenes; Art Mac Art, breaking suddenly from the group, flung himself on his knees at her feet. "Welcome, a hundred thousand times, chief's daughter, welcome!" he cried. "Blind and black fools we have been. By my soul, blind we have been. Put your foot on my neck, chief's daughter. Take my skene and run it through my heart! Oh, is it word you've brought of Hugh O'Neil, our hero of Clonmel, or word of your brother, Conner McGuire?"

The knowledge that she was snatched from death, raised from shame to honor, set the world spinning round the girl. She stood

with her hands still raised and clenched, with neither words nor tears to relieve the terrible emotion she felt. The torch had died out, only a few red sparks burned on the mossy ground, and the features of the men as they shouted round her were but dimly visible in the dark.

One by one they came and knelt at her feet, and took her hand and raised it to their lips. As she saw the bent forms, as she felt each man's touch, she knew that a hedge of steel ringed her about, that Boggas and the slave-house should see her no more.

"May I rest on the cold flag of hell!" cried Morrish Mac Shane, the nose-slitter, as he clasped her hand in a passion of shame and joy. "May the wolves end their hunger on my body! The black sight I had—the cursed, black sight—to take you for a child of the Galls, daughter of Banba!"

"Will you forgive us, Margery Ny Guire? Will you forgive us, Fermanagh's daughter?"

She choked back the tears rushing to her eyes as she looked down at the wild figures craving her pardon. She knew her birth had made each man her slave, that, at a word, she had sprung to the height of a queen.

"You did not know," she said, simply, "you did not know."

"That is God's truth," said Morrish Mac Shane. "We will die for you. By my soul, if we had ten lives each you should have them all! But how did you come here alone, vein of our hearts?"

"Is there need to ask?" remarked the young man who had borne the torch. "Did not her father die at Clonmel? is not her brave brother with the French? What friend has she left in Ireland?"

"All hearts of the Gael, Teage Oge, all hearts of the Gael! Give us the word, fair girl, and we will spill our blood for you."

"Men!" cried Margery, as it flashed upon her that their pikes were hers—"men, I have work for you. You have done me homage. Yes, I am a chief's daughter! My father led some of you at Benburb. Go to the House on the Robe—the house of Hunnings, the man-catcher. There are twelve Irishwomen there that he and others will take down Lough Corrib to-night. Save them, brave men, save them as if they were your wives and sisters."

Shouts of rage and curses followed her words. The men clenched their pikes and skenes as they sprang into line.

"May hell get them, but I know the woman of the house and Boggas!" exclaimed Teage Oge. "Good toll I'll take of them to-night for laying hands on you, Margery Ny Guire!"

"Go at once," cried the girl, "or you may be too late! But wait, there are Englishwomen among the stolen. You must swear you will not touch them."

"Your word is our law," he answered. "But we must first get our men together."

They crossed their pikes, and Morrish Mac Shane took the wolf-skin from his shoulder, and, like one decking a shrine, laid it across the staves. Then praying her to sit upon it, four men bore her through the wood.

She felt very near fainting, now the peril was over. Her hands clutched the staves, and she closed her eyes. When she looked about her again she saw that they were winding through a woodland path, and that a torch had been lighted to frighten the wolves. One of the men had drawn out a flute, and had begun to play a war-dance. The light flickered on the long, wide sleeves of his saffron-quilted garb as his fingers moved over the instrument. His pursed-out lips and gleaming eyes under the glibbe were shot now and then with a ray of torchlight. A dreamy feeling stole over

the girl as she looked and listened. For the time she had no apprehension, no desire, no care whether she lived or died.

Presently the party began to descend a slope covered with a thick undergrowth. A luminous glow broke the darkness in one spot; the men made for it. They carried her down with all the care a woman would show her child, the flute heralding their approach. When near the fire some wolf-hounds sprang up and bayed; and men lying under the rocks leaped to their feet to stare with hard, fierce eyes at the girl. Quick as a flash of his own skene, Teage Oge sprang forward.

"Down on your knees, galloglachs! down on your knees!" he shouted; "it is the daughter of Conner McGuire!"

A chorus of voices answered. In a moment the girl was lifted from the litter, and, staggering a few paces off, she leaned against a mossy, fern-clad rock. Then, as they pressed forward, she held out her hand, and they took it and kissed it, one after the other, with fierce adoration. Here and there a man broke into sobs. It thrilled her to see the tears in their eyes, to know that her name could awake a tumult of joy and hope in their hearts. Their yells rang from rock to rock as Teage Oge told

of the stolen women and of what Boggas and Hunnings had done. In an instant arms were seized, pikes and muskets dragged from their stacks, men hurried hither and thither, while a storm of voices echoed through the hollow.

And as she saw the arming and speed of the Tories, Margery suddenly gasped. Something she had forgotten rushed to her memory. Otley and his troopers had ridden out of Tuam thirty hours before to cut down every one of these outlaws.

"Who is captain here?" she cried, starting forward. "You, Teage Oge?"

A voice answered from the darkness behind her:

"No, Lady Margery, I am. I, Manus O'Donell. What can I do for you?"

She heard the ring of steel, and a young man stepped into light.

"Oh, why are you not in France?" she exclaimed, looking up and seeing one of her father's officers.

He took off his cap. "A long story, Lady Margery. I am a desperate man, and lead these Tories till I get a better command. I am deeply grieved to see you in such distress. I kept back when the men welcomed you. Let me greet you now," he bent on one knee

and kissed her hand. "Be sure I shall rescue the women from the man-catchers."

"But—but—" gasped Margery, "I forgot. You cannot—oh, the cruelty of it!—you cannot! The Lord President sent a troop of horse from Tuam last night to cut you off."

He leaped to his feet, and the men near who had heard her words paused, arrested in their arming. In a second the news spread from man to man, and all faces were turned on the girl.

"At what hour did the troopers leave Tuam?" asked the captain, breathing hard.

"They were to leave last night. I heard the order given."

"Then, God! they are surrounding us now!" cried the young man. "Muzzle the dogs! Beat out the fire!" he called aloud. "Art Mac Art, take three men and find out if they are closing in!"

"Let us make a stand here, Manus Roe!" exclaimed one of the outlaws. "We'd hock their horses among the rocks."

"Yes, by Mary! we'll meet them in the hollow! We'll show them the length of a pike!" cried O'Donell. "They'll send a party in by the neck of the ravine, and we'll meet them there. Morrish Mac Shane, take twenty men,

and lie in the bushes at the mouth of the gorge. Let the first section through, then open on them with the muskets. The rest of the men shall take them in front. They'll give no quarter, boys, and we'll give none. By God! I shall send the Lord President a bloody message."

Morrish Mac Shane gathered his men together, and, with a fierce wave of his sword, marched down the hollow. The others fell into rank, forty pikes and ten muskets, and waited for their captain's orders. Art Mac Art and his scouts had already vanished up the hill, and the snap of the branches grew fainter as they forced their way through the brushwood.

The young man turned to Margery. Her form was scarcely distinguishable in the deep gloom under the rock. "This is not a place for you, Lady Margery," he said, his face hard and anxious. "Ireton's Horse killed our women at the Cross. Teage Oge!" he added, hastily, "take the chief's daughter and guard her life as you hope not to taste the blade of my sword. Ride one of Hunnings's garrans. Bear her to the lough, and hide in the island until you get word from me."

Teage Oge stepped out of the ranks, hold-

ing himself erect. "It's a great honor — a great honor, Manus Roe, you have put on me," he said, huskily. "Sorry I am from my soul to miss the Sassanach. Sorrier still is my skene. It's thirsty it's been these twenty days for their blood. But I'll guard Conner McGuire's daughter—for it's the high honor of the word. God be good to me yet, and let me meet the Saxon devils!"

"The garrans are in Hunnings's field, Lady Margery," went on O'Donell, hurriedly. "You must walk thither."

The girl clasped her hands together. "Oh, brave men," she said, "I wish you had taken service abroad as your comrades did."

"It'll be a pretty fight," answered O'Donell, grimly. "But you must go at once, Lady Margery."

Just then a wild figure sprang through the bushes. "They are there, Manus Roe!" it gasped. "The wood is surrounded, save by the opening to the bog. Forty men are creeping round by the mouth of the hollow."

O'Donell took a stride forward. "Up the path, Teage Oge!" he whispered, sternly. "God keep you, Lady Margery. Every man here will die before you are touched."

The girl left the rock, her face deeply moved.

She laid her hand on his sword. "You ordered no quarter," she said, speaking with agitation. "But that is devilish! Spare the wounded and those that yield."

"They will not spare us, Lady Margery. This is not a place for you. I beseech you, go."

She turned swiftly and faced the silent, dark mass of life standing in the centre of the ravine. "Men, my father was your general!" she said, passionately. "And I, in his dead name, order you to give quarter, to spare the wounded."

There was no response, but a silence so significant that she burst into tears. At a sign from O'Donell, Teage Oge caught her hand with mingled deference and haste, and drew her up the slope.

Every now and then he stretched out a warding arm as they struggled through the bushes. A deep sob broke from her once or twice. In her companion's soul was a fierce determination to guard his charge to the death. Eyes and ears were on the alert, and his hand gripped his skene, ready to strike, and to strike true.

Near the top they paused, and he listened with all his soul in his ears. The silence still

remained unbroken, and, whispering to the girl that the way was open, he led her up. On the crest he lingered again for an instant. The trees formed a dense cover for a few yards, beyond which the wood widened into glades, thickening again just before the open ground. It was this point the scout had reported unguarded. Teage Oge stole forward.

The girl followed him, her agony of suspense, as the silence continued, killing all sense of fatigue. She saw the bloody picture being painted in the night: the closing-in of the disciplined, terrible soldiers, the gleam of their hungry swords. She saw the desperate men waiting for them behind the bushes and rocks, with the loaded hate of centuries. Her ears tingled to faint, thrilling sounds of slaughter, the dim echo of the shock of meeting hosts. Suddenly the horrible silence was broken; the muskets rang out, and the night was torn with answering reverberations. Her heart bounded, and she stood still as if turned to stone.

Teage Oge waved his skene and yelled. "It's begun!" he cried. "Oh for the killing! Holy Mary! why am I not there! Manus Roe, brave boy, son of great Tyrconnel, spare me one! Fair maid, I'll die for you yet. But, God! I wish I was there!"

He ran on, but she stood frozen to the spot, and he came back urging her to follow him. Then, seeing that her strength had given way, he took her in his arms and carried her towards the open ground.

His eyes gleamed as he looked across the grass-land to the bog. No horse could follow a fugitive thither. The safest path to reach Hunnings's field lay along its edge. The weight in his arms was little to him. She was something more than a woman in his thoughts; she was his chief's child, a princess to defend and, if necessary, to die for. This was all the light in Teage Oge's soul, the light that came from fidelity. He spoke cheering words in her ear; he told of the island in the lough, the ruined castle where a man and woman might hide safe from Cromwell's devils. But Margery could only hear the volleys behind her, while birds, roused by the noise, flew out of the wood, and a white owl, like a spirit of the slain, darted by her face with a shriek.

Teage Oge never paused; his breath came hard and short, hope was strong in his heart, the haven of the bog was near. Suddenly Margery cried out; two figures had sprung up from behind a bush, with wolf-hounds in a leash. They ran towards the outlaw with

drawn swords. He dropped the girl, and, springing before her, waited for them with his skene.

On reaching the wood Ottley acted on the reports of his scouts, and placed Cornet Salt with ten men at the lower pass, fifty yards lower down than where Morrish Mac Shane lay in ambush, sending also a guard to keep the upper end of the valley. Then, taking a party of dismounted men, he crept down the side of the ridge, hoping to surprise the Tories asleep by the fire. The troopers carried carbines with flint-locks, and each man had his priming ready. Half-way down the darkness and silence in the ravine made him halt and send a sergeant forward to report.

The moon had set, and the stars rained a pale, vague light into the black gulf of the valley. In half an hour dawn would spring beyond the purple, rounded tops of the trees that stood on the opposite slope. A few thin, web-like clouds hung towards the north. In the silence, as the men waited, the snap of a twig under the scout's returning feet rang out like a pistol-shot.

"They have been warned, sir," whispered the sergeant. "The fire hath been put out, and men guard the lower pass."

Ottley made a signal to advance, and the troopers went down. Not a sound was heard beyond the crackling of bushes, or once or twice some unguarded ring of steel. At the bottom they formed, and, sending a detachment along each side of the ravine, he marched the rest of the men down the hollow.

The Irish had set no watch to guard the higher pass, as they expected the attack to be made by the lower, which afforded the only entrance for horse. O'Donell had drawn up his men with their faces towards the latter, waiting for the moment when Morrish Mac Shane should spring out on the troopers.

Suddenly the carbines spoke behind him, and at the same instant the Irish were raked by a fire from the slopes. The surprise was so complete that they fell into disorder for a minute, but, rallying quickly, wheeled and fired on Ottley's party. Their weapons were the cumbrous, old-fashioned wheel-locks, no match for the troopers' carbine, and after one volley the musketeers fell back. Then the pikemen advanced with such fierce eagerness that Ottley's men had not time to reload, and in an instant sword and pike and skene clashed and crossed.

Hearing the firing and shouts, Morrish Mac

Shane sprang up with a yell, and, followed by his men, leaped into the hollow. Breaking into groups, they rushed up the slopes and fought the troopers hand to hand among the bushes. But the heart of the fight was on the broken ground in the valley. There the Tories defended themselves with a fury that sent the life leaping out of many a trooper. Shouts and oaths and fragments of texts, choking sobs and wild cries in Gaelic answered the clash of steel. But the Irish were penned in. On each side of the ridges they were shot and sabred. The first fierceness of the struggle passed into the isolated resistance of a few men fighting in groups of twos and threes among the rocks. Not a man among the Celts asked for quarter. Mad with hate and despair, they swung their skenes and swords till the death-thrust set their souls staggering into the dark. A few on the hillside broke through the troopers, but they were quickly followed and cut down by the mounted men as they fled to the bog.

Morning had broken as a party of the soldiers galloped across the open ground and overtook the last of the fugitives.

"A great work!" said Cornet Salt, raising his bloody sword. "Truly, we have wiped out the nest of vipers; yet not we, but the God of

Hosts. Ah! there lies one of the dogs over yonder, and he moves."

His eyes rested on a figure lying close by the bog; one hand had been slowly raised to the sky. "Go, Pumcry!" he cried. "Go, and spare not."

The trooper rode forward with his sword held for the thrust. At the thud of his horse's hoofs the wounded man sat up. His bloodshot eyes glared at the soldier; conflicting passions spoke in his gaze. Just by his side another figure knelt, half hidden by a clump of gorse.

"Sassanach!" he gasped, in broken English, controlling his hate, "Sassanach, search the House on the Robe!"

Trooper Pumcry withheld his blow. "What is it, dog?" he said.

But the man could only repeat the words, and Cornet Salt galloped up.

"Is this how you do the work of the Lord?" he cried, fiercely. "Smite and spare not! Yea, I myself will open the door of hell for this kerne!" and bending from his saddle he ran Teage Oge through. The man kneeling by the outlaw's side rose to his feet. The sword was raised and swung over his head for a moment; then a gauntleted hand seized him by the neck.

"Bind him fast!" exclaimed the cornet. "We have caught one of the priests of Baal! Truly, this is a crowning mercy. We have made him captive, and that in the midst of his idolatries, even at the moment when he held up his accursed wafer before this dead dog!"

The priest stood still. He made no reply; his eyes rested on the dead man at his feet, his lips moved.

"And, sir, I claim half of the five pounds," said Pumcry. "We got him together."

"I will not withstand you," answered the cornet. "But this man's price, if I mistake not, will be above a wolf's. He hath long been sought for."

They turned to meet Ottley, who, with half his command, was riding out of the wood. Blood streamed from some of the men; their faces were hard and exultant.

"Give praise to God!" called out the cornet. "We have slain these dogs of Tories!"

"At the cost of a good number of our men," said Ottley, grimly. "If I could but lay hands on the fellow who warned these Irish!"

"Truly, I think we have found him," answered the cornet; "even this priest of Baal whom the Lord hath delivered into our power."

Ottley gazed down at the bound man; the look he had worn in the fight still gleamed in his eyes.

"Did you warn these outlaws?" he asked, harshly. The pale face of the priest did not change color, nor did his eyes flinch before the question.

"God did not give me that duty," he answered, calmly.

"Heed him not," said Cornet Salt. "Deceit is in his heart, lies are meat to his lips."

"Officer," and the prisoner's voice took the high note of one who has no fear, the note of one who commands—"officer, lead your men to the House on the Robe, and God do to you as you do to those you find there."

"Silence!" cried the cornet, "thou servant of Satan! In a few days you shall tread the floor of hell!"

Ottley turned in his saddle. "Does any man know of a House on the Robe?" he called out.

There was a moment's pause; then a voice answered from the ranks: "It stands on the river-bank, sir, a mile distant. Joel Hunnings and the old woman, his mother, live there. Word hath come lately that they have done more man-catching than the Commissioners do

allow, and have kidnapped the wives of the soldiery."

The battle light died out of Ottley's eyes; for half a minute he sat silent and motionless on his horse; then he swung round in his saddle. "Place a guard over the dead!" he called suddenly, his tone sharp and clear. Sergeant Acland, tell Surgeon Tipland to bring the wounded to this House on the Robe. Cornet Salt, take charge of the party left, and report at Hunnings's when the burying is done. Forward, men!"

He dug his spurs into his charger's side, and galloped across the open ground. His gaze rested on the fort-crowned hill as he and his troopers swung by its base. He felt as if a cold hand clutched his heart, that he was about to face some horror worse than the carnage in the wood.

VII

THE troopers skirted the bog, and, trotting through the plough-land, surrounded the bawn and the castle. Ottley drew rein before the door of the house, and knocked loudly on it with the hilt of his sword. After a while an upper window was opened and the Singing Woman looked out. The morning air caught her loose gray locks and blew them about her face. Her eyes rested with assurance on the soldiers. "Come, come, this be a welcome sight!" she cried. "My son started for Tuam yesterday to get us aid against the Tories."

"Open the door!" commanded Ottley, "and let all in the house assemble in one room."

"Oh, brave men of war, I see your garments are stained with blood," answered the Singing Woman. "All that are in the house shall stand before you."

A minute later the door was flung wide, and, ordering ten of the men to search the ruins and the out-buildings, Ottley entered the house.

Mistress Hunnings stood alone in the kitchen ; her hands were on the spinning-wheel.

"Where are the rest?" he demanded.

She turned the wheel and took up the thread. "With my son, on the road to Tuam, handsome officer."

"You are charged with kidnapping the wives of the soldiery," he said, sternly. "I place you under arrest."

The wheel spun faster, but there was no reply.

"You have a lady here," he continued, after a moment's pause. "Where is she?"

The old woman raised her eyes. He met her penetrating gaze with a hard, angry look. "She hath escaped. I fear the Commissioners will deal with me for this. But she hath the wiles of these salvage Irish and hath fled."

Ottley went to the door and summoned a trooper. "This woman is under arrest," he said. "Search the house."

The man went up the stair, and Ottley stood on guard near the door. His face was towards the window ; every now and then the Singing Woman shot a glance at him from under her eyebrows as she spun ; then suddenly she sang:

*"Spin, spin, spin, O Fate,
Spin the threads of love and hate.
Sing, sing, sing, my wheel,
Sing of ruin, death by steel.
Grow, grow, grow, O thread,
This man's fate be on his head.
Eyes hold him in spell,
Short the road that leads to hell."*

He listened unmoved, and her gaze dwelt on him again as her song died away. A bright gleam shot from her eyes as he turned without haste to the sergeant who had come in to report.

"The place is empty, sir," said the man. "We have searched the ruins and out-houses." As he spoke the trooper clattered down the stair with a similar report. Not a soul was in the place except the soldiers and the Singing Woman.

Margery had been carried off to Galway or Limerick! Ottley's blood leaped at the thought. He saw her misery, her despair; he knew the terrible future before her. He saw the slow agony of the death-ship, the horrors of the voyage. She was beyond salvation now. Neither the Lord President nor the Commissioners would grant a warrant to have the vessels searched in either harbor. Not a

man who helped in the government of Ireland would stretch out a finger to rescue an Irish Catholic from transportation. The girl's fate was sealed ; there was no hope.

Then the blood rushed to his face, he turned to the window and stared out at the laughing river, the green island, the swelling country beyond. The wheel hummed behind him, the woman muttered broken words of her song ; the sergeant stood by the door waiting for orders. Yes, it was true, he knew ; her eyes held him in their spell. His heart stirred with a passion of pity and regret.

Suddenly he remembered the man, and turned.

"Set a guard at the door," he said, and went out. Despatching a burying-party to the wood, he walked up and down outside the bawn till Surgeon Tipland and the bearers came up with the wounded. The captain, with a mortal thrust in his side, lay in the arms of two men. A trooper rode in the rear whose horse showed signs of hard spurring, and as Ottley bent over the dying officer, he pushed forward and saluted.

"Colonel Hewson sent me from Tuam last night, sir, with this despatch," he said, holding out a letter.

Ottley took it. It was an order to arrest Joel Hunnings and his mother and send them to Loughrea, there to answer the charge of having kidnapped three women, the wives of English soldiers. When he turned to the captain again the young man was dead.

"He hath gone to the God of battles, yea, to the Lord of Hosts," said the sergeant. "Truly, a brave end."

"Ah! a many a lusty soul hath flung a main with death and lost this morning," remarked the surgeon, who, his sleeves rolled up, his hands and arms stained with blood, stood back a pace from the dead man's body.

Ottley looked away. The chill of the grave seemed to rest over the place. He was conscious of feeling deep sorrow for the loss of his comrade, yet through that grief he knew that something worse than death had happened. The rising sun, the morning light, appeared garish and hard to his gaze. The hideous valley in the wood flashed through his thoughts; he saw the dead, he heard the groans, and right across that bloody scene a vision of the ship, of Margery, filled his heart with horror.

An hour later Cornet Salt rode up to the house with the rest of the men, his face gray and grim. "We have buried our dead," he

said to Ottley. "The kernes we left to the wolves. Sir, I have to report that the priest hath escaped, and the five pounds and more that should have been mine and Trooper Pumcry's hath slipped through our fingers. While we busied ourselves with the dead he managed to get away."

That hour had given Ottley time to think. He had formed his resolve. As he listened with apparent attention to the cornet, he was ordering his plans.

"There are more priests to hunt, Salt," he said. "You and Pumcry will catch a man yet. Meanwhile you must take over the command of what is left of the troop. An orderly hath brought a letter from Colonel Hewson, and I have to set out this hour for Loughrea. As the men and horses require rest, remain here till to-morrow. Let the woman within be sent with two men to Loughrea by four of the clock this afternoon."

He sprang into the saddle as he spoke, gathered up his reins and rode away. The cornet heard him in grim silence, then ordered the men to fall out, and drew his Bible from his breast. One of the soldiers had found the ford, and Ottley went down the bank and crossed the river. He was about to make a

desperate effort to save Margery. He was going to tell the Loughrea Commissioners her story, to implore them to have the ships searched, to spare the girl.

At midday all his gathering fears took form and grouped themselves about his heart. The Commissioners would refuse the warrant; the result of his appeal would be to bring suspicion on himself. They would consider transportation a very satisfactory ending to her case; they would show the girl no mercy. Then—worst thought of all—the man-catchers had had six or seven hours' start; the ship might sail even before he had time to plead her cause.

The certainty of failure darkened his ride, but his resolution held strong. Desperate as her case was, he meant to risk refusal, suspicion, every danger, on the chance that he might yet keep her from the slave-ship. He felt a slow fire burning in his heart; he dared not read the meaning of his horror.

Towards the afternoon he heard fast galloping hoofs in his rear, and on looking back he saw three men spurring after him. Though they were dressed as civilians, he judged by their air that they had been soldiers, and, tightening his rein, he waited to hear their errand.

They saluted as they swung up, and all cried out together to know whether he had met any men and women along the track.

"We are looking for the man-catchers," the stoutest of the three called out. "'Tis a damnable business, sir! They have stolen our wives, even taken them as if they had been salvage Irishwomen, whom 'tis their lawful right to catch and send to Indian Bridges."

"I have seen no one," said Ottley, sudden interest in his face.

"Then they have made good their march. We must ride forward, sir, or the knaves may get them on ship."

"I'm on this business, too," he answered, and turned his eyes up the track.

"Then, sir, it may like you that we journey together, since our errand is the same. And, if so, I will briefly lay our plan before you, which is to ride fast to a worthy settler's house, five miles hence, get the loan of fresh horses, whereby we can push on to Loughrea, and there demand that warrants be given us to search all ships in Galway Bay."

"A very good plan," said Ottley, shortly, and drove the rowels into his horse's side. The men followed his example, setting their own animals into a gallop on the level ground.

His eyes had a strange, reflective look. Half-grimly he wondered if the fiend had sent these soldiers, or the girl's guardian angel. They had shown him the open door. If he passed through she would be saved, but he—

"And, sir, have these villains stolen your wife?" asked the stout man, as they galloped along.

There was not a second's pause; the answer was given instantly and with distinctness.

"Truly, then, sir, you know how we feel. These three weeks past we have been searching for our wives, and but within the last twelve hours we have learned that the man-catchers had them."

"We shall get the warrants," answered Ottley, and every nerve tingled as he spoke.

"But, sir, if the ship hath sailed?"

"Before God, we shall follow them!" he replied, but the same fear was eating at his heart.

All their hope now lay in the wind. It was coming from the southwest, and increasing. When they mounted the horses the settler had lent them they rode forward like men pursued. The faces of the husbands had grown eager and haggard. Ottley's, too, wore an anxious,

stressed look. He was throwing aside his honor, giving up his position, and risking his liberty. His cooler self was overridden, and the girl's haunting eyes had drawn his soul from him. Since the only way to save her was by a lie, he meant to take the chance of his own damnation, so that he might keep her from the pit.

It was well on in the night when the guard opened the gate and admitted them into the town. The three men shouted out their errand to the soldiers standing in the gleam of lamp-light, whose faces darkened as they heard the tale. The officer on guard sent a man to guide them to the house in which the Commissioners lodged. It was in a street close by, and the party quickly roused the doorkeeper from his nap. The man bade them lay their petition before the Commissioners on the morrow, but a threat from the husbands to wring his neck, and a piece of gold from Ottley, led him to look with more favor on their request. Leaving them in the hall, he went up-stairs, and returned in three minutes to say that Mr. Commissioner Weaver was abed, but that Mr. Miles Corbett would hear their errand.

Pushing past him, the husbands hastened up the steps with the speed of men driven by a

fever of fear. They beckoned violently to Ottley as he followed them at a more deliberate pace. He had touched now the crisis of his life, and he knew it. In a few moments there would be no going back. His face was very pale as the servant opened the door and he walked into the room.

Mr. Commissioner Corbett sat at a table dictating to his secretary. He broke off in a sentence, and fixed a pair of shrewd eyes upon the men. The three soldiers hung back to let Ottley pass, tacitly delegating him as their spokesman. He advanced with apparent coolness, and raised his hand in salute. But a sudden thought had rushed with fearful conviction upon him: the Singing Woman was already on her way to Loughrea.

"I regret to trouble you, sir," he said, in a clear, level tone, "but our business is urgent. We have been robbed of our wives by the man-catchers, and we want warrants to have the ships searched."

"And, what is more, sir," put in one of the husbands, sternly, "we demand, as English soldiers and settlers, that justice be done upon these men."

The Commissioner looked at Ottley. "I perceive you are an officer, sir," he said,

shortly. "What is your name and to what Horse do you belong?"

Ottley gave the information. The Commissioner looked harder at him.

"I have a packet here," he said, in a short, sharp tone, "a packet just arrived from the Lord President, which tells me that a party of men of Ireton's Horse, under Major Piers Ottley, hath been despatched to cut off the Tories lying near the Robe. How come you to have left your duty, young man?"

"I had done my work, sir."

Ottley's voice still kept its even note.

"Are the Tories dispersed?"

"We met them last night, sir, and cut them to pieces, with a loss of thirty men and two officers on our side."

"Well, well," said Mr. Commissioner Corbett, looking pleased, "that is good news. But thirty men—the rogues must have stood their ground. Where have you left your troop?"

"At Hunnings's house. Men and horses required rest, and litters had to be made for the wounded."

"An order hath been despatched for the arrest of Joel Hunnings and his mother. Did it reach you?"

"The woman, under a guard, is on her way hither," said Ottley. "The son had escaped."

As he spoke a nervous thrill of fear seized him again, lest by any possibility the Singing Woman had already reached the town. His impatience to end the scene rose to a tumult in his heart. The Commissioner leaned back in his chair and stared him in the face.

"I do not commend you for leaving your men, and that without permission, Major Ottley," he said. "Nevertheless, you have wiped out the nest of Tories, and some allowance may be made, seeing that it is your wife that hath been kidnapped. But how is this that there are three others on the same errand?"

"They have suffered a similar loss, sir."

Ottley's eyes met the Commissioner's steadily. But his heated fancy saw the guard bringing the woman down the street up to the door. He heard the clatter of the hoofs, her harsh, deriding voice. He felt his teeth setting together, he saw himself holding to his lie in spite of her presence. In the pause one of the husbands strode forward.

"I urge you again, good sir," he exclaimed, "to despatch this matter with haste! I and my two companions are old soldiers and know the value of time."

"True, true," echoed the other men. "While we parley here, sir, the ship may have sailed."

"I will give you the warrants," answered the Commissioner. "This is indeed a grave scandal, and hath already reached the ears of Mr. Weaver and myself. But Sir Charles reported that only three women had been stolen. He had not heard of your loss, I conclude, Major Ottley?"

"No, sir. I only learned it myself this morning."

The Commissioner turned to the secretary. "Make out the warrants," he said.

The man took a sheet of paper and dipped his pen with deliberation into the ink. The husbands' eyes rested hungrily on it as the Commissioner addressed Ottley. "What age and appearance hath your wife?" he inquired.

There was not an instant's hesitation in the reply. His own coolness seemed something odd to Ottley himself. When further asked for the girl's Christian-name he gave it with an assurance as natural as if years of companionship had made him familiar with it. Yet all the while under this outward control the woman's song was beating on his ear.

The order was then made out, and the secretary passed it to Mr. Corbett, who read it,

signed it, and handed it to Ottley. The young man's eyes ran down the sheet, which ran thus:

"To all masters of vessels carrying deported persons to the West Indies or elsewhere, be it known that they are commanded to give up the person of Margery Ottley, adged twenty, of fair complexion and hair, to her husband, Major Piers Ottley, of Ireton's Horse, to whom the right of search is granted.

"MILES CORBETT, Commissioner."

He folded up the paper, and put it under his coat. It seemed to him that Margery's head lay against his heart; her name at least was there. The sudden reckless elation that comes at the moment when a man hurls himself on danger seized him. His eyes shone with a bright light, his lips smiled.

The other warrant was made out, and when each husband had received his paper the Commissioner addressed them:

"This matter shall be rigorously inquired into," he said. "The woman Hunnings shall be forced to confess her part in the roguery. Have a brave heart, good men. Be assured justice shall be done on the pickthanks."

"We leave our case in your hands, sir," replied Ottley. "Mr. Corbett," he added, and there was a certain slowness in his tone as his eyes turned steadily on the Commissioner—"Mr. Corbett, this woman had in her charge an Irish lady, the daughter of the late Earl of Fermanagh. From what I learn she is among those stolen. Will you grant a warrant for her rescue?"

The husbands had already got to the door; they looked back with impatience. The Commissioner folded his hands together; the secretary had drawn the despatch towards him, waiting for his master's dictation.

"Sir," said the Commissioner, cheerfully, "that is a good matter. If the man-catchers would sweep all these mere Irish into their nets, I and my colleagues would be the better pleased."

"Is the lady to be rescued?" asked Ottley, shortly.

"No; from what the Lord President reports, she is a vagrant, and as such comes under the act."

Ottley saluted with a certain grimness and turned on his heel. He went down the stair with his hand pressed against the spot where the order lay.

In the street the four paused for a moment. The wind shouted past them, and each man's heart took hope.

"We must get fresh horses," said one of the husbands, plucking at Ottley's sleeve. "This wind, if it lasts, will keep the ship."

They returned to the guard-house, and took some food while fresh mounts were being procured. Then, followed by the good wishes of the soldiers, they rode out of the town. They had twenty miles of hard riding before them on a road that was merely a track. Each man spurred hard, and towards dawn the wind suddenly sank, and a fine rain, like a silver web, fell over bogs and fields. The red streak in the east vanished as if a finger had been drawn across it, and a white sun stole up the colorless arc, to disappear behind the great dun banks of vapor.

The day had come ; before them lay the old merchant town, the Connaught stronghold of the Anglo-Irish. The guard at the gate opened quickly at their summons, and one or two officers came out and would have spoken to Ottley on seeing blood on his uniform. But he called out that he was the bearer of a warrant from the Commissioners and could not delay. Their arrival, however, and the news of the kidnap-

ping made some noise, so that the soldiers gathered to stare after them.

They rode down to the harbor, and hearing that the *Joseph of Thornbury* still swung at her moorings, hired a boat and set out for the vessel. The waves were running high, and after twenty minutes' hard rowing the gray wall of the mist broke, and they saw the ship standing out about fifteen yards to the right. The boatmen hailed and rowed alongside. Ottley and the husbands climbed up by the main-chains, and after a sharp parley with the captain were allowed to go down to the lower deck. Strange faces met their search, wild enough with grief and despair, but the women they sought for were not there.

No other vessel was in the harbor, and they rowed back with every fear renewed. As they drew near the shore the three men asked Ottley what he meant to do; for themselves, they said, they intended to set out straightway for Limerick.

"Let us go first to the governor," he said, "and demand that he help us in our search."

This was Colonel Stubbers, a noted man-catcher, and it struck Ottley that he probably employed Hunnings in the business. There was the risk that he might know Margery's

real position ; but each moment was precious, and he must run the chance.

They found the colonel up, and about to breakfast. He was a coarse, fierce-looking man, who had treated the townspeople with terrible severity. But he appeared tame enough when Ottley showed him the warrants, glibly agreeing that the theft of Englishwomen was a scandalous matter, and sent at once for his clerk.

"Have all the deported been consigned on board?" he roared, as the man came in.

"All, sir," answered the clerk, stolidly ; but Ottley saw a look pass between him and his master.

"There, sir, you see," said Stubbers, trying to be polite, "we cannot help you. The last batch was put on board the *Joseph of Thornbury* this morning."

But Ottley had caught the clerk's eye ; he bowed to Stubbers, and, followed by the husbands, who looked as if they thought he had wasted their time, left the house.

"Well, sir, you'd have been better advised to have started for Limerick half an hour ago !" exclaimed one of the men, irritably. "What do we wait for?"

Ottley made no answer, for the clerk was

coming out of the house. The man looked at the group from the corners of his eyes. "I cannot speak to you here," he said, in a lowered tone. "Walk down to the archway at the end of the street."

The party moved forward. "You made a sign to me, sir," he said, when they drew up out of sight of the governor's house. "In what way can I serve you?"

Ottley opened his purse. "No boat except our own left for the *Joseph of Thornbury* this morning," he said. "Now, fellow, tell me quickly where we are to search."

The clerk looked at the gold, and his hesitation was brief. "Go down the street," he answered, "and stop at the Spanish house that faces the Lyon's Tower. And remember, gentlemen, that my name doth not appear in this matter."

"We will remember," replied Ottley, and the clerk, taking the gold, went away.

They walked on as he had told them, and turning the corner saw a large house with arms cut over the door and with high, Spanish windows. Going up to it, they knocked, upon which the door was at once opened, and a man in a buff coat looked out. Ottley showed him the four warrants.

The soldier drew back, and they entered the house. "You have arrived in time, sir," he remarked. "The vagrants were brought in at five of the clock this morning," and he pointed as he spoke to a stair leading down to the cellars.

Ottley made for it quickly. The light faded as he went down the dank stone steps till he could only just dimly grope his way along. The husbands came behind him, breathing hard. Suddenly a voice challenged, and a man stepped forward; a second figure leaning by the wall loomed out in the gloom.

"We come from the Commissioners, fellow," cried Ottley, in a commanding tone. "Move aside, or it will be the worse for you."

The hand of the man by the step went to his sword, but as he drew the steel the soldier overhead called down the stair:

"Do not withstand them, Boggas! They have warrants from the Commissioners!"

The man paused, but still grasped his weapon as if undecided whether to strike or not. Ottley sprang from the step and ran to the door. His hand found the bolt, and, drawing it back, he pushed the door open. A lantern hanging on the moist wall shed a faint light on the scene within, and the cold, fetid air of the place met

him like a whiff from a graveyard. Vaguely outlined forms huddled on the floor or crouched by the walls. All his hope, his fear, and horror at the thought of Margery's sufferings looked from his eyes as he stared around the cellar; then a cry, wild and terrible in its expression of mingled ecstasy and doubt and agony, filled the room, and a woman sprang to her feet, and, hysterically sobbing, flung herself upon one of the husbands. In a moment more the other men had found and embraced their wives; and, in the midst of tears and laughter and broken words and sobs, Ottley saw Margery. She was leaning against the wall with her face hidden, but looked up at the strange cries of joy. Her eyes met his through the reek and gloom; there was an agony of despair, of appeal, in her gaze. In an instant he had reached her side.

"I have come for you," was all he could say. She did not seem to hear his words; horror still looked from her eyes. "I have come for you," he repeated. Then a great sob broke from the girl, and she sank forward. Raising her quickly, he told her that there was nothing to fear, that she was safe, that he had come to save her. He repeated the words again and again, and, supporting her with one arm, led

her to the door. The faces of Boggas and Hunnings turned upon him with malignancy in their gaze.

"Friends," he called out to the husbands, "arrest these men!"

A sudden rush and clatter followed, and Boggas darted up the stair. Hunnings made an effort to follow, but was collared at once. Ottley's heart beat high as he ascended the steps; he thought neither of the past nor of the future as his arm supported Margery. In the hall the dazed look left her eyes; she drew herself swiftly apart from his side.

"You will bring me to the Lord President," she said, in a tone of despair and reproach. "Oh, my God, I wish I were dead!"

"I have come to save you," he stammered. "Lady Margery, I have come to save you."

He took her hand again as if to lead her from the house, and in her misery she went with him. At the door the sentinel spoke.

"You have found your wife, sir?" he said.

"Yes, I have found her," Ottley answered.

The girl started as if she had been stung, and drew her hand from his clasp.

VIII

HER eyes, frightened and haughty, demanded an explanation as she looked up. He felt the blood mount to his face and turned to the sentry.

“Take the women from the cellar and lodge them in a better room,” he said, sharply. “The Commissioners mean to deal with this matter.”

The man left his post to carry out the order. As he disappeared the husbands and their wives came up the stairs. They led Hunnings bound.

“Oh, sir, how can we thank you? Oh, sir, we pray Heaven to bless you!” cried one of the women. “We were lost and are found.”

“In truth, sir, we owe you somewhat,” said the stout man. “But for your wit we should have been riding off to Limerick.”

“It must have wrung your heart to have parted from so young and sweet a gentlewoman,” exclaimed his wife. “A brave lass, too, who would have led us all across the bog from

the House on the Robe. Ah, young mistress, you must be deep in love with so gallant a husband."

With her eyes on the ground the girl stood trembling, unable to utter the indignant denial that rose to her lips. All the world spun round her; whether she were free or lost she could not tell.

"We will not linger long here, sir," continued the stout man. "I would know your will about this rogue."

"Take him to the guard-house," said Ottley, his face stern in the control he had put over himself. "Tell the officer in charge he is to be sent at once to Loughrea. He is a noted liar, and not to be believed."

Hunnings grinned; he looked obliquely at Margery.

"Very good, sir," said the man. "I will see your will carried out."

Saluting, he and his companions walked to the door, and passed into the street. One of the wives waved her hand to Margery as she followed.

"Farewell, sweet lady!" she exclaimed. "I did think you one of the Papist Irish, but truly I fell into a fault, seeing that you have to husband this English officer."

The silence in the hall was deep for a minute. Ottley suddenly broke it.

"Lady Margery," he said, "we may be interrupted here. Will you step into that room?" He pointed to a door that stood open leading into a lofty apartment.

"Sir," and the girl's voice quivered, "I wish first for an explanation."

"I intend to give it," he answered. "Pardon me for what I have done."

He moved towards the door, and she followed him after an instant's hesitation. The danger and folly of the situation were rushing upon him. He had reached a moment when he was abruptly confronted by the first of the long chain of consequences. The girl for the minute was rescued, but he was ruined. The madness of his act, the certainty that his career as a soldier of the Commonwealth was over, made him stare aghast at his own fatuity. Moreover, Hunnings would tell his real connection with Margery, and, though at first the man might not be believed, a host of witnesses would soon prove that he had no wife. Twelve hours of liberty, not more, lay before him.

The room he entered looked out on the garden, now neglected and overgrown. The walls

were hung with Spanish leather; a few richly carved chairs and a table were all that were left of the handsome furniture with which the apartment had once been filled. The arms and initials of the merchant prince who had built the house were carved above the high green marble mantel-piece. Ottley paused when midway in the room, and looked at the girl.

"Lady Margery," he said, quietly, "you wish to know why I gave the sentry that answer?"

"Yes, Major Ottley." A faint color relieved the pallor of her cheeks; her eyes were lowered.

"I did it because the Commissioners would not have given me a warrant for your rescue unless they believed I had a right to claim you."

"And have you got such a warrant, sir?"

"Yes."

She looked up; her eyes suddenly flashed. "Give it me!" she said, haughtily, and held out her hand. He thought of the gorse blossom she had taken back from him, and as he saw the deep color rush to her face while she read the paper, the fear of the ruined soldier was lost in the passion of the lover. He

watched her steadily for a moment till she crushed the warrant in her right hand, and, turning her face aside, placed the left over her eyes. Then he did a desperate thing.

"Lady Margery," he said, with a coolness that surprised himself, "will you be my wife?"

Her hand fell from her face; she looked up swiftly, and her voice quivered with shame and anger.

"Your wife! No, sir, never! I do not love you, I do not even like you. You are one of Cromwell's officers. You have killed my people. You have killed the Tories. I would have saved them from you! I warned them when they found me in the wood, but—but it was too late."

She broke down and sobbed hysterically. He walked to the window and looked into the garden. After a minute he left the room and spoke to the soldier, who had returned to his post. Then opening a side door he went out. The garden was surrounded by high walls, and the raindrops were falling from the neglected bushes and fruit-trees.

He had capped his folly, he thought. He might have known the girl would refuse him; he was but a ruthless soldier in her eyes. Want of sleep and mental excitement had

driven him from one act of madness to another. He had sprung headlong himself from the precipice. But—the girl was still in danger. It would be time enough to think of his own ruin when he had secured her safety. He must take her out to sea in a fishing-boat on the chance of meeting one of the French cruisers, or risk the voyage across. Ah—what was that the aide-de-camp had said?—*the hell of Charles Stuart's court*. Yes, the girl had no friends, her brother was dead, and she was indeed alone.

He sat down on a dank iron seat, and drew lines in the gravel with the point of his scabbard. All the sparkle had passed from life; it was a mockery, mere Dead Sea fruit. The reaction from great mental exaltation and his physical exhaustion gave him a sense of collapse. He could only see the lees in the cup that had once been full to the brim.

The rain fell in a fine mist around him; the wind had risen again, but had shifted a point to the north. Presently out of the mist he saw Margery coming down the path. Her wind-blown hair, her clouded eyes, made her look like a spirit in the gray-white vapor. He could only stare at her, his hand arrested on the scabbard.

She paused at a short distance from the seat; her cheeks were white, her gaze was fixed beyond his face.

"I have come," she said, "to thank you for ruining yourself for me. Yes, I will be your wife; then the Lord President and the Commissioners will not know the warrant was false."

He rose to his feet. He knew at once that she only saw half his peril, that she believed the marriage would save him from ruin. And he knew, too, that she did not love him, that she was ready to sacrifice herself as a return for what he had done. He stood for a few moments looking down at her in silence. Suddenly he remembered that the rain was wetting her yellow hair, her face, her dress.

"Do you mean what you say?" he said. "But do not answer me now. Come into the house."

He took her hand and led her up the moss-grown walk to the door. They crossed the hall in silence and entered the room. Both their faces were very pale.

"Do you mean it?" he asked, his tone repressed and anxious.

She pushed her wet hair off her forehead. She was half dead from want of sleep, the ter-

rible scenes she had been through, the horror of her thoughts.

"Yes. I saw it all when you left me. I saw that the Commissioners would never forgive you for forging that warrant. And you had run the risk to take me out of hell. But they can do nothing to you if I am really your wife."

She paused, and the silence for a few moments remained unbroken.

"And then, since you will be safe," she went on, "I will go to my brother, who is with the king. For you are an English soldier, and I—I am Margery Ny Guire."

He looked down. A packet bringing news had reached Tuam an hour before he had led his troop out.

"Lady Margery," he said, "I had better tell you now—at once—your brother is not with the king."

She started. "Then where is he—where? I must go to him!"

"I grieve to tell you. A packet from Dunkirk brought the news that he had fallen in Austria."

"Dead!" she said, and her voice sank into a dreamy note. "Dead!" For a few moments she seemed like one half asleep; then she gave

a sharp, sudden cry. "Oh, I still wish to go to him—I will ask Death to take me!" No tears had come to her eyes; she was dazed and stunned by the blow.

A look of tenderness and pity sprang into Ottley's gaze. "Lady Margery, before God, if you marry me, I will protect and love you," he said, simply.

"Oh yes, I will marry you—I have promised," she said, speaking again dreamily, and looking at him in a vague, uncomprehending way. "You shall be safe. I have given you my word. But I could not live with you. I must find my brother—I must find him." She sank on a chair by the table and buried her face in her arms.

He went into the hall, and sent the soldier for food and wine. When he returned to the room he found she was asleep. Getting paper and pen from the man, he took a draught of the Burgundy and wrote two letters. The first was a brief note to General Fleetwood resigning his command; the second he wrote with an outpouring of heart, with passion, to the greatest man of that age. "I would not have him think I had lightly fallen into shame," he said to himself. "He will believe my word."

He took the letters, and, ordering the soldier to let no one enter the room, went out and sealed them at a clerk's house. Then, going to the harbor, he learned that a fishing-smack would sail that night for Limerick. The fishermen spoke in Gaelic, one of their number translating what they said. They were dark-browed, wild-looking men who eyed him stealthily. They told him that he would find a vessel sailing for The Hague at Limerick, peace having just been made with the Dutch.

On his way back he paused to buy a cloak for Margery. He calculated that the Singing Woman would not be brought before the Commissioners till past noon. The orderly would be despatched to Galway after the court rose. If by any chance an officer who knew him should be present while she was examined—and Ottley thought of Major Ormsby—Stubbers would be ordered to arrest him. The man would reach the town by nine or ten of the clock, by which time he and Margery must be at sea. Here the girl's future darkened his thoughts. It would be a dastardly thing, he said to himself, to marry her, letting her think that she had saved him from disgrace by becoming his wife. If she learned that the marriage would not prevent his being

court-martialled, she would see no reason for a sacrifice. It was true she was absolutely friendless, and must look to him to secure her safety. But, God, what safety would it be to land her penniless in a foreign country!

On entering the house he found her still asleep, but the clank of his sword made her sit up with a start. He took the food and wine and put them before her. "I have found a boat that will take us to Limerick to-night," he said. "A ship there that will carry us to The Hague."

She looked up, her eyes puzzled, frightened. "But—but—you remain with your regiment. You remain with the English soldiers in Ireland."

"If I do," said Ottley, gloomily, "I shall be court-martialled and removed from my command, and probably imprisoned."

"Not—" and her face flushed, "not if they learn the warrant is true."

"That will not save me, Lady Margery. I want to tell you that our marriage will not mend matters for me as regards my profession. I let you know this so that you may act as you choose."

"Then—what will save you?"

"Only flight," he said, with stern brevity.

There was a brief pause. His gaze was averted, but the girl's eyes were fixed on his face.

"When you rode to save me, did you see all this?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Then—why—why did you ruin yourself?"

He smiled rather grimly. "For an old reason—old as Adam."

She turned her head away and leaned her face on her hand. His eyes rested on her with a deep, steady gaze.

Suddenly she said, without looking up, "Major Ottley, what do you mean to do?"

"Place you in safety, then give my sword to the Swedes."

"And—am I free?" The blood rushed up to her face.

"Yes, most free. I could not keep you to a promise given under a misapprehension."

A silence followed, which was suddenly broken by the noise of men entering the hall. The girl's face blanched with terror, and Ottley took a step forward, his hand on his sword. As the door swung open, Colonel Stubbers, followed by a guard, walked in. Ordering the men to stand by the entrance, he stalked up to Ottley.

“Major,” he said, speaking civilly, though his coarse face wore a lowering look, “a bird hath shown you our nest. For myself, I am innocent of this matter. These people came in this morning, after I had held word with you. I am told—and now I see—that the Englishwomen were among them.”

“Yes,” said Ottley, hoarsely, his repressed excitement alone showing in his eyes.

“Hearken to me, major,” continued Stubbers, suddenly changing his tone and speaking roughly. “The man Hunnings hath brought a strange report to my ear. A word from you will discredit it, for I am aware you are a young man of approved valor and would not imperil your soul’s salvation by a lie. He doth declare that this lady is not your wife.”

“I have satisfied the Commissioners on that point,” said Ottley, haughtily. “I am not bound to answer an insolent question.”

Stubbers turned to Margery. “Mistress, is Major Ottley your husband?” he asked. Ottley’s eyes rushed to her left hand. It seemed a miracle, but there was a ring upon it.

“Sir, you have heard his answer,” she said, in a voice that trembled.

“It doth not disprove the charge. If you

are his wife, say so. Is this officer your husband?"

She rose to her feet, her face ghastly, and walked slowly up to Ottley. Placing one arm round his neck, she laid her head against his breast. "Yes, go!" she said, and felt as if the room and life itself were sinking from her.

"I am satisfied," answered Stubbers, "and offer my apologies to you, mistress, and to Major Ottley. I know Hunnings to be a liar. He hath brought me into ill repute with the Commissioners, and he shall suffer." He turned to the guard. "Remove the vagrants from the house," he roared, "and see that they are duly shipped on the *Joseph of Thornbury*."

Ottley stood rigid as if turned to stone, but the blood was leaping through his veins. The fair head was on his heart, so near his face, and he dared not bend and kiss it or clasp her in his arms. His eyes were drunk with ecstatic surprise, fear, and longing. The governor strode from the room. Then the arm slipped from his neck, a shudder ran through the girl's frame, and the next moment half the width of the apartment separated them from each other.

He walked to the window. He knew now that he wanted her before all things else in life. Not daring to speak, he stood looking

out at the dismal garden. Thus some minutes passed, till the thought of their peril rushed upon him again. He remembered the imperative need of getting away before the Commissioners' messenger arrived. All the passion died out of his eyes as he turned to the girl, who had sunk upon a chair with her face hidden in her arms.

"You must take some food," he said, and she stirred a little, rising presently like one half asleep. They ate in silence; then, putting on her cloak, he led her from the room. Some soldiers had gathered in the hall, and he gave his letters into the charge of a sergeant.

The afternoon was drawing in. All day long the rain had kept the day dark, and the clouds still hung unbroken over the town and the harbor. Neither he nor Margery spoke as they made their way to the quay. The terrible shock of her capture and her brother's death had broken her spirit. She followed him with a white, impassive face, as if life had run down and the bitterness of living were over. The boat was ready, lying by the wharf; and after he had placed her in the stern he went farther up and sat apart. The sailors crowded round her as if to keep her from being seen from the shore. Ottley won-

dered with alarm if they knew that she was a fugitive. Then he remembered that it was a Celt that had warned him of her danger, who had written the line that he had found under his saddle-flap—*She ye saved is lost.*

When the ghost-like gleam in the west told that the sun had sunk, the men unmoored the boat and ran up the sails. The great cup of the ocean dipped and rose against a misty, yellow-ochre line that rimmed the sky; all the curtains of the night slowly loosened and dropped over the swell of the waves.

Stunned and most miserable, Margery fell asleep, and slept till a voice sharply asking a question, and a loud, sullen answer, made her start and sit up. It seemed to her that it was past midnight, that she had been sailing outward over the Atlantic for hours. Then, as her eyes cleared, she saw that the boat had been run in close to the shore and was swinging under the lea of a mountain. A light twinkled from the land, and stars showed over the cliff between the threads of a black, trailing cloud. One of the men had sprung on shore, and the rattle of the shingle under his feet rose above the deep breathing of the sea.

“Why are we here?” Ottley called out. No one answered, but the boatmen spoke together

in Gaelic, and their eyes took a hostile look as they turned them upon him. He crossed the thwart to the stern.

"What are these men saying?" he asked the girl.

But even as he spoke a man bent towards her. "You can land, *mo chraobhin aoibhinn alga*,"* he whispered in Gaelic.

She rose to her feet and staggered. Ottley caught her. "What does it mean?" he asked again.

The sailor stretched out a hand. "The maid, not the Sassanach," he exclaimed, pointing with the other to the shore.

"Some of our people are in hiding here," she said, trembling; "they will not let you see them."

"But I am a fugitive," he answered, "and can do no harm. And why are you to land?"

Two pistols were suddenly pointed at his head, and at the same moment a voice called out to the girl. "Go ashore, fair maid, go ashore. Those that will help you are there."

"They will not touch you," she whispered, "only you must not land."

She staggered again at the movement of

* My fair, noble maid.

the boat, and one of the sailors led her to the bow.

"You will come back?" cried Ottley, suddenly, as he saw her carried on shore. "Margery, you will come back?"

There was no answer, and the men shoved the boat farther out. He sank down on the thwart, hiding his face in his hands. The light of his life was gone, and she would starve or be caught by man-catchers on that desolate, sombre coast.

The boatmen muttered together, and after a while a voice called from the shore. It came hard and strident down the wind. The men answered and pulled closer to the land, and for a few moments the ocean and beach resounded with the shouts of the sailors.

A hand touched Ottley's shoulder. "Soldier, you must land," said the man, ominously, in English.

All the eyes in the boat were fixed upon him with sullen interest. Ottley sprang to his feet, and, drawing his sword, leaped on shore. He did not care if it was death he was rushing on, so that he met Margery before he died. As he hastened down the beach he saw the light in front blaze into a greater glow, as if suddenly renewed. Then out of the black

shadows of the night two figures rose and stood in his path. As he raised his sword to defend himself a voice cried out, "Englishman, we are friends!"

He paused, still standing on guard, and the voice went on: "Major Ottley"—the words were spoken in pure English—"I am Father Taaffe, the priest whom your men captured, brother to that Lord Taaffe that fell at Drogheda, and, by the mercy of God, spared yet awhile. I have not brought you here that your life should be taken in retribution for the lives you have slain. I have sent for you in order that we speak about the Lady Margery Ny Guire."

"Where is she?" broke from Ottley.

"In the cabin yonder. Young man, you and yours have been as devils let loose on the land. But you have saved this girl, the child of a great race. Her brother is dead. The Stuarts are traitors to their friends; all that trust in them perish. Take this maid and make her your wife, for the times are black, and a worse evil than marriage with you may befall her yet."

Ottley smiled; he lowered his sword; he could have shouted a pæan. Then the fire in his soul became white heat; every emotion seemed welded together; he felt strong, re-

newed, exultant. Mind and spirit grasped the reins of his life; he had recovered control of himself. His manner became calm and assured. "You are complimentary, priest," he said, "but my wish runs with yours."

"I am doing, perhaps, a mortal sin," continued the priest, "in marrying her to a Puritan, and one heavy with the blood of the people. But hell in life awaits her if I put her not under your care."

"She does not love me," said Ottley, as if suddenly remembering something.

"Sir, it will be for you to win her love. Now she will obey my command and marry you."

They had been walking on. Ottley stopped short at the words. "She must come of her own will, not by a priest's command," he answered. "I will return to the boat."

"My time is short," replied his companion, "and I must go to others of my flock now perishing in the mountains. This matter must be arranged at once. Major Ottley, the girl's heart is turned towards you."

Ottley stood hesitating for a moment, then he went on towards the cabin. The door was open, and he saw Margery sitting by the turf fire, her hair held over one arm as she dried it

by the blaze. She did not stir as the men came in, and the priest moved with dignity to her side and looked down at her bent head.

"My daughter," he said, gently yet solemnly, "the man into whose hands your life must be given is here."

She started, and Ottley saw a vivid color rush to her face as she stood up. "Lady Margery," he said, looking keenly at her, "are you marrying me of your own free will, or are you only obeying this man's commands?"

Her eyes fell and her fingers closed round a long tress of her hair. "I obey his command," she said, "but—I marry you, too, of my free will."

"Before God?" he asked.

"Before God—you saved me—yes, you saved me from *death*!"

Then only gratitude influenced her! He stood hesitating, looking down for a few moments. Love never sprang after marriage from it; a calm, barren emotion without glow or passion. Should he take her? Reason must guide him here, not his heart. And, soft-eyed, all her darts hidden, the calm goddess arose. In wise, measured words she spoke of the girl's danger, friendlessness, destitution; showed him that he alone could protect her. But as she

turned smiling away he saw it was not reason that had spoken, but love. He looked up as the priest spoke, and took his place by Margery's side.

To him the sacrament was no marriage. His training and instincts made him regard the vows made before a man whom his troopers had hunted, whose neck must come to the gallows before long, as binding neither in the sight of God nor of the law. He determined to have the ceremony performed over again at The Hague. But he knew that they were solemn to Margery, and that she would not look upon herself as a wife unless a priest had married her.

She continued to kneel after the final words, and the priest's voice sank as he uttered a blessing. Then it rose into a prayer, sudden, appealing, agonized. "O God!" he cried, "look upon the travail of this nation. O God! their forefathers sought out the heathen and showed them Thy love. Deliver them, for they starve and die on the mountains; they are ridden down and slain; their sons and their daughters are sold into captivity. Hear, O Lord God! hear and save!"

Then his eyes lit up with the look of one who saw across time and death, who saw where

God's promise waited for its fulfilment. He gathered up his shepherd's cloak, and as Margery knelt sobbing on the mud floor he went out into the night to meet his death among his people in the mountains.

One of the boatmen touched Ottley's sleeve and pointed towards the sea. As he did so a man with pale, pinched features and a long, yellow beard came out of a corner. He told Ottley that they were to sail southwest to meet a vessel that was lying off the coast for some fugitives, adding that he was one himself, and urging that they should start at once.

Ottley moved towards Margery. But she had heard the man, and, rising to her feet, went out, leaving her head uncovered. A lonely feeling seized the young man, and his outstretched hand fell to his side. She was a cold, grateful bride, nothing more. He saw her light figure bend before the wind, her hair blowing out behind her in pale strands. The boatmen hung round her side as they reached the edge of the water, talking in Gaelic. One of them turned to Ottley and said a few words which the yellow-bearded man translated. It was a rough apology; they had not known the priest's will.

Ottley took a seat apart from the girl, and

sat looking over the waves, which swelled and curled and tossed black under the cloudy sky. His heart was bitter within him.

In the stern Margery told her beads and wondered why God had thrown her into the arms of an English soldier. And the more she wondered, that that had happened seemed less strange and awful. Once or twice she dared to look up the boat, but the face under the steel cap was turned away.

So the boat danced on before the wind, and the minutes grew long and solemn, and the night and eternity became as one to the girl. Mystic sounds rose and sank, and sobs and voices thrilled along the dark from the mainland. And the cries of those who were lost, of the captives, came faintly from the islands of death, borne on cold currents to her ears.

Then out of the blackness, creeping against the green of dawn, a ship rose on the left. The boatmen cried out at the sight, and the sudden clamor of their voices seemed to hold and fill the wind. They drew nearer to the vessel, and a few minutes later the fugitives were helped on board. The night still hung over the ocean, but the tender presence of the dawn held the sky where it met the coast.

Suddenly Margery knew that Ottley was

near. "You are safe," he said, in an emotionless tone. "This ship sails for The Hague."

He moved away after he had spoken, and stood looking out across the water. The tears gathered and fell down her cheeks. Her fears, her loneliness, seemed embodied in the night—floating, sombre-winged forms in the silence, the darkness, around her.

Something made Ottley turn. A ray of light from a lamp in the hand of a passing sailor flashed on her face for a moment. "Oh, I am sorry," he said, involuntarily, his tone not quite steady. "How can I help you?"

But she made no answer, and the light danced down the deck.

"I know," he continued, and a new note sounded in his voice—"I know that your heart is not mine, does not turn to me, shrinks from my claim. I know that gratitude, not love, hath made you my wife. And I—I love you so much that even the crumbs you give make me content. Yet it would be torture to my soul to find my presence made you unhappy. And, seeing this, I shall place you with some noble lady of your own faith—and we shall part."

There was no sound for a moment but the noises of the ship and the singing of the wind and the deep calls of the waves; then a whis-

per, that he thought he would have heard though dead, reached his ears.

"And—you—?"

"And I—yes, I will go to Sweden."

A sob broke from the girl. "I have ruined your life. I—I have done it."

"My ruin is sweet," he answered, "since you are here, since you are safe."

"Oh, forgive me," she said, "forgive me. I would do anything to give you back your past."

"You are crying," he said, suddenly. "Do not think of me. Why do you think of me? My past holds nothing beyond the hour we met. I can claim and keep and remember that."

Then the wind caught her whisper, brought it to his ears, to his heart. He started and drew nearer.

"Sweetheart—!" he said, and took the hands stretched out to him in the dark.

Two months later the following letter reached him at The Hague:

"SIR,—You have lied, for which I would remove you from your command. But, sir, you have also repented, whereby the patience

and long-suffering of God may be shown towards the sinner who confesseth his fault, Satan being a dark and crafty enemy who doth assault the soul with all sharpness and heat, wherefore the true soldier should meet and overcome him, having the qualifications in his inner man whereby the darts of the enemy do fall harmless. Considering that your letter and the manner and nature of your trial, being moreover willing to remember the work you did on manifest occasions in the past, I grant you full pardon and permission to live with Lady Margery, your wife, on those your lands in Lincolnshire.

“OLIVER P.”

APPENDIX

FOR THE FURTHER INSTRUCTION OF THAT ENGLISH
MAN OR WOMAN WHO HATH NOT READ THE
HISTORY OF THE GAEL.

The Transplanter's Certificate.

THE certificate given in this story is copied—with a change of names and a slight increase in the number of the animals—from that of Lord Castleconnell. “An enormous scheme of eviction had been planned by Cromwell, which was to include all the native and nearly all the Anglo-Irish inhabitants of Ireland. . . . This was the transportation of all the existing Catholic landowners of Ireland . . . to Connaught, there to inhabit a narrow, desolate tract between the Shannon and the sea, destitute, for the most part, of houses or any accommodation for their reception, where they were debarred from entering any walled town, and where a cordon of soldiers was to be stationed to prevent their return.”—*Ireland, The Story of the Nations*. Any one of these people found east of the Shannon after the 1st of May, 1654, were to be killed. Some were hanged. Clarendon says, “They found the utter extermination of the nation, which they had intended it to be, in itself very difficult, and to carry

with it somewhat of horror. . . . There was a large tract of land, even to the half of the province of Connaught, that was separated from the rest by a long and large river, and which, by the plague and many massacres, remained almost desolate. Into this space they required all the Irish to retire by such a day, under the penalty of death."

The Soldiers' Grants.

The soldiers' arrears were paid in grants of land. Numbers of them sold them for trifling sums to their officers. Sir Charles Coote, Major Ormsby, and others bought up the lots at two-and-six, or, at the utmost, five shillings an acre.

Cromwell's Soldiers and Irishwomen.

"The English soldiers were forbidden, under heavy penalties, to take Irish girls for wives. For any amours with them during their service in the army they were severely flogged."—*Prendergast*. Dragoons marrying were reduced to foot soldiers, foot soldiers to pioneers, without hope of promotion. General Ireton writes from Waterford, 1651: "I say any officer that marries any such shall hereby be held incapable of command or trust in this army." The soldiers, however, married Irishwomen, in spite of threats or penalties.

Margery Ny Guire.

The Macguires were a powerful clan. Their chiefs ruled as princes of Fermanagh from very early times

to James the First's reign. Sir Bryan Maguire, Knt., was created a peer of Ireland by Charles the First. His son, Conner, second Lord Maguire and Baron of Enniskillen, joined the rebellion of 1641, and was hanged, beheaded, and quartered at Tyburn the 20th of February, 1644.

The Tories.

These were native Irish who took to the woods, many of whom had been soldiers in the armies of Owen Roe O'Neil, Preston, and Ormond. They were sometimes led by gentlemen whom the times had rendered desperate. No quarter was ever given them.

THE END